



ALL EYES ON ISRAEL

REVISED EDITION

By Roy Allan Anderson
and Jay Milton Hoffman

Like a time bomb set in the midst of a crowded room, Israel is watched by an anxious, tension filled world. Why are all eyes on Israel? The answers are given in these power packed pages detailing biblical prophecy, international intrigue, and divine intervention. Roy Allan Anderson and Jay Milton Hoffman are two men well qualified to speak about Israel. Their findings—the result of years of research—make for unforgettable reading.

All Eyes On Israel is perhaps the finest effort of these well known authors and scholars: a documentary about the near future!

**Published by Harvest Press
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Fascinating history and fulfillment of prophecy about God's Chosen People and their promised land. *All Eyes On Israel* shows how history proves the scriptures. It gives estimates of the physical wealth, the mineral and agricultural wealth of the Canaan land, showing that it still flows with milk and honey. It flows even in terms we can understand in a modern, technological age — terms that the enemies of the Jewish state can understand and covet.

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Covenants Are Forever. . .

All Eyes On Israel foresees a day when Israel will, in large part, return to the God of their fathers. With an eye on God's faithfulness and the promises of Scripture, Hoffman and Anderson foretell of a great day when those who have returned to the land of the promise will also return to the God of the promise.

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ALL EYES ON ISRAEL

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ALL EYES ON ISRAEL
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Cover Design by Don Day

Lithographed in the U.S.A. by
McElhaney Printing & Publishing
Fort Worth, Texas 76105

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ISBN 0-930718-15-1
Printed in the United States of America.

Harvest Press Incorporated
Post Office Box 3535
Fort Worth, Texas 76105

In Canada: Lawson Falle Ltd.
Cambridge, Ontario
In Australia: W. A. Buchanan
Brisbane, Australia

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INTRODUCTION

Dr. H. M. S. Richards

Here is an unusual book, one that will lift the sights of the reader, giving him a broader understanding both of Scripture and of what is happening in our world today. The story of Abraham and his posterity through the centuries is fascinating and grows with interest each passing year.

The fact that the natural representatives of this chosen family are, after all the milleniums of history, still influentially present on earth in spite of the erosion of the ages, is certainly remarkable. This fact seems to sustain the view that Israel has been preserved as a witness to God's Word. They have been called "the immortal nation" — and compared with the other nations which lived around them three thousand and more years ago and have long since disappeared completely, they deserve the title. If this is so, why is it so? Is there Scriptural evidence of special interest on the subject of this chosen people and their place in the world? If there is, thinking people in general should be able to have access to it.

These questions and many others are considered in this volume, **ALL EYES ON ISRAEL**, co-authored by Roy Allan Anderson and Jay Milton Hoffman. For readers I would suggest several points which it would be well to fix in mind. First, this volume will be found unique in that it is truly a Messianic-centered study, setting forth the Scriptures in a new and arresting way. People have for

centuries had various views on this topic handed down from father to son and generation to generation. In this book the authors go back to the original Biblical sources and challenge us to think the subject through again.

More than 300 years ago in the American colonies, Increase Mather, who was probably the outstanding theologian of the country, published a book entitled MYSTERY OF ISRAEL'S SALVATION. That year was 1669. Others had written decades earlier dealing with the same thing. In those days there was not the slightest indication that Israel would ever become a nation again much less occupy the land of their forefathers. In those days, Palestine was under the strong rule of the Ottoman Empire. In this volume there are references made not only to Increase Mather's work but to a number of other early scholars who wrote on the subject such as Dr. J. Thomas, 1848; Dr. Walter Chamberlain, 1854; John Cumming, M.D., 1864, as well as numbers of outstanding commentators and lexicographers, such as Wilhelm Gesenius, D.D. All of these writers emphasized Israel's predicted return in spite of what the nations might do to hinder such a program. They declared that the return of Israel to the land of their forefathers was bound to take place because *it is clearly taught in the word of God.*

Chapter 15 of this book, "The Election of Israel," I read with special interest. The conditions under which this election took place ~~and~~ the causes of the national lapse into idolatry, and their later dispersion to all parts of the world ~~as~~ a result of that spiritual lapse. This chapter presents something else. It emphasizes the fact that their captivity in various parts of the world was brought about in the definite plan of God. It was not merely a historical reaction of warlike attitudes or criminal acts of individuals above the common run of humanity at the time. Far from it, the nations around them were as bad, sometimes worse, depending on the standpoint from which we look at it.

God's warnings ~~to~~ to Israel and their forecasted dispersion are connected usually in the very same verses of the Holy Scripture, but always with promises of His

blessing upon them when they returned to Him. Not only would they return to Him as a people and receive His blessing, but that they would ultimately *return to their own land*.

After the Babylonian captivity ended in 536 B.C., many did return to Palestine. According to Ezra 2:1 those who returned then were the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin which went into captivity in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. Before their captivity they were known as the Kingdom of Judah. But the Scriptures refer to Israel in general, the ten northern tribes as well as the members of the southern kingdom. Israel was scattered by great world powers not only in Babylon but among the nations all about the historical horizon. In fact, today there are Jews in practically every country on earth.

These authors attempt to show that it was not merely for their sakes that they would return from the lands they were driven, but God declared He would remember the covenant which He had made with "their ancestors." This is referred to in some of the deepest theology in the Bible in Romans 9, 10, and 11. Whatever one's views on the subject of Israel, natural and spiritual, he should study carefully pages 181 through 209 of this book which cover so thoroughly this subject of the election of Israel and the relationship of Gentiles to Jews, and of the Israelite community both natural and spiritual. The authors' Biblical and secular references are particularly good.

The eleventh chapter deals not only with the promises made to the Jews but also the Arabs, both groups being direct descendants of Abraham and his posterity to whom the promises were made. In fact what is said about the Arab peoples is of vital interest today.

To me, one of the most interesting parts of the entire volume is the section on the times of the Gentiles. Six or seven different views of this phrase are found in that great sermon on eschatology in Luke 21, Matthew 24 and Mark 13. The very expression in Luke 21:24 "the times of the Gentiles" implies there was also a period recognized as the times of the Jews. When did these times end, and when did the times of the Gentiles begin? And when were these

times to end? These are questions with which all Bible students certainly are concerned. Do not miss this exceedingly interesting development of this subject.

The great prophecy of Ezekiel 37, the valley of dry bones, has exercised the ingenuity of preachers for over two thousand years. What does it mean? Does it refer to the resurrection at the end of the world? Does it refer to this and something else? Or does it refer to something else alone? A whole chapter is given to this prophecy and is both informative and challenging.

The chapter "The Mountains of Israel" is both unusual and compelling. Be sure to read the "Message of Masada," which is really a thrilling part of the story and is told in a fascinating way. Masada is a flat-topped mountain fifteen hundred feet high on the southeastern edge of the Dead Sea. This mountain Herod the Great transformed into an impregnable fortress as a refuge for his family and himself should war come. He stored it with food and water in such a way that he was practically unassailable above these mighty crags. The great crisis never came, however, during Herod's lifetime.

The authors have shown how when the Romans took over Palestine, soldiers under the authority of Rome were later stationed in that fortress high above the surrounding country. The political affairs were growing more and more tense between patriotic people of Palestine and the great Roman overlord in Italy. Only a spark was needed to set the blaze of war. This was supplied when trouble broke out between the Caesarean Greeks and Jews which resulted in the slaughter of 3600 Jews in A.D. 66. A little later a group of desperate young Jews who, considering themselves heroes and patriots, ascended one night secretly to the top of Masada. Surprising the Roman guards they pounced upon them and slew them, and seized the fortress. When word reached Rome, another Roman army started toward Judea. About a thousand men, who had escaped from the defense of Jerusalem, made their last stand on its rocky heights. The whole amazing story is told in this chapter with references to its

part in the general subject of the book. This is a background often missed by students of the Bible in consideration of the fall of Jerusalem.

This book is filled with material of great spiritual and historic wealth and will lead to a deeper study of God's Word, whether one accepts all the views of the authors or not. In their prophetic interpretation, they have attempted to follow a very conservative rule. "All Scripture language is to be taken literally, unless there exists some good reason for supposing it to be figurative; and all that is figurative is to be interpreted by that which is literal." Dr. David L. Cooper, a modern writer, in his book *When Gog's Armies Meet the Almighty in the Land of Israel* (published by the Biblical Research Society in Los Angeles, 1940), puts it this way, "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise." The authors of this volume feel that when this rule is ignored it leads to unfortunate and limited views.

I would like to say a word in general concerning the work of these men. They have spent much time, having researched the subject very thoroughly. Anyone who enjoys reading a carefully thought out plan and a well-prepared book will enjoy this one. They stick close to the very words of the Scripture, and have produced confirming statements from reliable history, as well as from works of both ancient and modern writers. All careful students and scholars will appreciate this.

In reading this book some will naturally ask, "What of the future?" Does natural Israel actually have a place in the divine program? One thing is certain, Israel is here. While some theologians might wish the nation were not here or that it would go away for the sake of their views, yet Israel will not go away unless taken away by force. We cannot know every detail the future has in store for us. It is not our business to know except as God has spoken. And in these chapters the Lord's Word is clearly set forth.

Even when dealing with the much-debated subject of Armageddon, one discerns a freedom from dogmatism and a constant appeal to the Word of God as authority. Here is a unique approach with excellent suggestions.

The last 40 pages of this book will thrill and challenge the reader for here the Scriptural picture of Israel is portrayed in unmistakable language according to the views of these two able writers. The mighty day of God's power is just before us when the Spirit of God is to be poured out upon all flesh and that will stir the world, including Israel.

Whatever one's views concerning certain details of the prophecy, when he starts to read this book or when he is finished reading it, he will undoubtedly know a great deal more about the subject than he did at first. This writer therefore urges a careful and prayerful study of these fascinating chapters especially "Spiritual Israel, Defined by a Brilliant Rabbi." The handling of this delicate subject is the best I have ever seen. It is sound, wonderful truth.

Pen pictures of Israel in eternity by the Biblical prophets have always thrilled and inspired the people of God. And when we read and reread them in the light of the facts set forth in this volume, it is the conviction of this writer that we will be inspired more than ever and will be led to say, "What hath God wrought?" I personally have appreciated the clear exegetical approach.

Every section of this book has interesting sidelights not found in any other volume, as far as I know. Note these: Chapter Twelve, "Every Jew A Miracle"; Chapter Three, "Israel's Marvelous Mineral Wealth"; Chapter Four, "Further Developments in the Land of Israel"; Chapter Five, "Israel's Agricultural Development in the Light of Scripture," "Israel and Armageddon," "God and Magog Confronted by Israel's God." Here the reader will find new ideas, new views of great interest which will lead to more study, more interest, more blessing.

If you should find some things in these various chapters which you have never thought of before, do not reject them because they are new. Or should you find some

things directly opposite to your own views, do not refuse to read them. Rather study them, and especially pray about them. In any case, the book will do us all good. Let us not neglect to read Israel's Declaration of Independence found in the Appendix section. This is an inspiring and historical document and will help the reader to know more about the present situation and the basis for the existence of the Republic of Israel. I suggest the reader early turn to that. It will help make things clear.

I have greatly enjoyed going over this manuscript. It has brought great blessing to me and has given me the urge to dig more deeply into this whole question. It has been a joy to have had a part in it.

FOREWORD

Dr. Kenneth L. Vine, Ph.D.

For millennia the Middle East has been the center of much of the world's attention and activity. It was here that Noah and his family, following the flood, began to repopulate the earth. It was here, therefore, that the remains of the earliest cities and civilizations were to be found. It was here that the God of Heaven chose a man, Abraham, for his faith, obedience, and trust, and said to him, "In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:3, NSAB).

It was in this fascinating place that the great nations of Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome played their role in the dazzling but sordid panorama of earth's history. But more especially it was here that God established a people that he called his own (Exodus 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6 and 14:2, etc.), to whom he gave a challenging commission (Genesis 18:17-19, etc.) and through whom the Messiah was to come (Genesis 49:10; Isaiah 9:7; 11:1-5; Micah 5:2; etc.).

For seventeen years it was my privilege to work in this area, which is so full of challenge and interest, to delve into the past through its antiquities and customs, and to study the present tragic situation that prevails between the two cousin peoples.

As an archaeologist, I can testify to the tremendous amount of material that has thrown light on the validity of the Scriptures. It has been my privilege to dig at several Biblical sites in the Middle East. These include Ai (under the direction of Dr. Joseph Callaway of Dallas Theological Seminary) where the ancient Israelites met their first defeat in the Conquest after crossing the Jordan (Joshua 7), and Caesarea, chief city of Herod the Great

(under the direction of Dr. Robert Bull of Drew University). It was in the latter city where the animosity between the pagan and the Jewish population culminated in 66 A.D. when the Syrians slaughtered most of the Jews in the city. This triggered the really First Jewish Revolt which virtually ended in 70 A.D. with the fall of Jerusalem to the Roman forces under the leadership of Titus.

From that day until 1967 A.D., Jerusalem was out of the hands of the Jews, except the brief period of the Bar Kochba rebellion 132-135 A.D. The question has arisen as to whether or not this all has its place in Bible prophecy. Has God played a part in the establishment of the present State of Israel? What part, if any, do the present strife and turmoil in the Middle East have in leading the world to the final Battle of Armageddon?

In my Bible and archaeology classes at the University, I try to emphasize the importance of the Middle East and what is happening today. Many have not fully understood the fine relationships of such writings on Israel as the Epistle to the Romans. To me the writer claims that everyone who is hoping for a place in God's Eternal Kingdom must be a part of Spiritual Israel. In the area of the final climax of human history, when the Judgments of God are to be poured out, it should be noted that the stress should be laid not upon specific peoples or nations in conflict, but upon the fact that all will end in a climax of a world in rebellion against a God of Love, with the righteous on the one side and the wicked on the other.

May this book, by two fine scholars and teachers of the Scriptures serve to challenge the reader to dig deeper into the truth of Scripture and determine to be, by God's grace on the right side of the final conflict.

PREFACE

The emergence of the Jewish State in 1948 took the world by surprise, because for centuries the Jews had been left to haunt the corridors of history as outcasts driven endlessly along the road of sorrows without a hope of ever rising again to greatness. Then, all at once, these despised people, having perfected their organization, proclaimed in Tel Aviv their national independence. While many had for years insisted that the Jews would never return to the land of their fathers, much less become a nation, yet Israel today is back and is a strong nation with Jerusalem as the capital. Why?

The history of this age-old city shows it withstanding the storms of millenniums as they swept over this little land leveling walls and buildings only to rise again and again from the ashes of defeat to proclaim anew its message to the world. Even the enemies of the Jews watch with wonder her tenacity to exist. During their long history of four thousand years, the Jews have never lost their spirit, nor has their faith ever been shattered. Despite the millions butchered and burnt by the massacres of hate, the Jews are still with us.

The story of Jerusalem and the land it symbolizes is the story, not only of one people only but of the whole Mediterranean area. Even more, that story forecasts the future of the world. That is the theme of this book, and as authors we have sought to present a precise picture of Israel's history and destiny. The facts set forth in this volume are the culmination of decades of research and personal, on-the-spot observation.

While divergent political and economic structures naturally segregate Israel today, yet she maintains consular and diplomatic relations with more than one hundred countries in all the continents of the world, some of which belong to entirely different blocs. As a member of the United Nations, Israel is bound by the principles of

the Charter which aims for an amicable settlement of all international differences, guaranteeing a just and fruitful development of all the people of the world. While the theme of this book is chiefly concerned with Israel, the authors are just as concerned with their neighbors — the Arabs — for they too are great peoples having produced a rich culture and with a civilization that won the admiration of the world. They too are part of Abraham's posterity to whom God also made very definite promises.

The big question today is: "How can national relationships in these areas stand the strain of these tumultuous days? What is the future of the Israelis and the Arabs, of both the land and the peoples? The coming years alone hold the answer, yet the prophets of old have made plain God's purpose for Israel and our planet. Clear biblical statements in the light of ancient and current history are set forth in this presentation.

An important objective of this book is to help our Jewish as well as our Christian friends to realize the significance of what is happening in the land of Israel. One of the authors is Jewish himself. Naturally, he has a deep concern for his own people. Consequently, these chapters can be read with real confidence by members of the Jewish people, as well as by Christians.

While there are divergent views concerning the situation in our world, all realize that man stands today at the crossroads of history. In his heart, are ideals of prosperity, even eternal redemption; yet in his hand are the tools by which he can annihilate civilization. And in the lobby of history are many Jews standing and wondering if, as a nation, they have been the victims of a grand illusion or are they actors on the stage of a divine mission?

From its inception, the Jewish National Movement has sought to obtain a publicly recognized, legally secured home for the nation which was to become a center for further cultural development of both Arabs and Jews. Leaders of these cousin peoples at the beginning looked forward to their living side by side, sharing and enjoying the same opportunities and basic rights. But, too often,

the smoke of hostilities has obscured the real objectives and given the world a false idea.

That the Arab leaders shared these objectives in the early years following World War I is seen by this statement of King Hussein of Hejaz. On January 3, 1919, he said, "We saw Jews streaming to Palestine from Russia, Germany, Austria, America. . . . The cause or causes could not escape those who had the gift of deeper insight; they saw that the country was for its original sons, for all their differences, a sacred and beloved homeland."

A statement of agreement was concluded in the terms of the Balfour Declaration at the Paris Peace Conference between his son Emir Feisal, Chief Arab delegate, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann representing the Jewish nation. In the terms of this agreement was a separate territory for the Jewish entity which the then imminent Arab state would recognize. The tragedy is that those terms have been so often violated that the world has almost forgotten they ever existed.

Ante-Semitism from any quarter, or in any form, is powerless to uproot from the Jew his attachment to his vision of a God-outlined destiny. Despite the fact that the rationalist twentieth-century Jew has largely lost his confidence in the kind of Messiah for whom his forefathers looked and prayed, within his heart is still the messianic concept. Neither logic, nor science, nor philosophy has robbed him of his belief in a divine leading. Arthur Herzberg quoted Ben Gurion's impressive words: "I believe in our moral and intellectual superiority, in our capacity to serve as a model for the redemption of the human race. . . . The glory of the Divine Presence is within us, in our hearts and not outside." (*The Zionist Ideal*, p. 94).

In his fascinating volume — *My Country*: — Abba Eban, Israel's Foreign Minister, spoken of by one reviewer as "a blend of Shakespeare and Churchill" closes his reflection on the present situation in these words:

"At the end of a generation, scarred by war and nourished by many triumphs, some of Israel's

original values are in doubt. . . Will the temptation of parochialism and apathy be overcome by appeal to a Jewish legacy which is universal in space and eternal in time? This tension between national particularity and broad universal vision runs through the whole of Jewish history. Israel's task is not to ensure the total eclipse of one by the other, but to bring them together in creative alliance. *My Country: The Story of Modern Israel*, New York: Random House 1972, p. 298.

The center of Biblical geography is Jerusalem; the key to our understanding of the ancient prophets is Israel. History shows the Jewish nation being catapulted from one civilization to another then being swept out to the earth's far ends, and now returning again to the land of their fathers. But what is their future? "As long as the Jews stick to the ethics of the Torah and the ideology of the Prophets," says Max Dimont, "they will remain indestructible."

In an effort to help the reader understand the story of this people, we now send forth these chapters, praying that the Spirit of the living God, Whom we feel has guided in both the research and the writing, will now lead the reader to a clearer understanding of His eternal purpose.

While many areas of Middle East prophecy and geography has been opened up in these chapters, as authors we fully recognize that the subject is much larger than can be handled in one volume. We therefore solicit the reader's prayerful examination of what we here present.

Grateful acknowledgement is extended to the many authors from whose publications we have quoted and for all who have helped bring this work to fruition.

Roy Allan Anderson
Jay Milton Hoffman

Chapter One

ISRAEL'S ROLE IN HISTORY

Ever since the Roman army overthrew Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the land of Israel has been a problem. Strange that a strip of territory, no larger than the state of New Jersey, should assume such importance. Stranger still that a people, numerically insignificant, should exercise such an influence in the world. Strange indeed, until we study the Hebrew prophets.

No one can understand the Jew until he understands the Bible. Someone has well said, "Israel is both a state and a state of mind." The name had its origin that night when Jacob struggled with the Angel of God as recorded in Genesis 32:34-38. Emerging from that experience, the patriarch was no longer to be called Jacob but Israel, meaning "one who is God-ruled." So the name Israel is really a spiritual name.

For two thousand years the Jews have been in a struggle for survival. Tremendous forces have been hurled against this people. Tyrants through the centuries have been determined on their extinction. Nations in the past have been either obliterated or absorbed; their identity has been lost. But the Jews are still with us.

Because of the important role they were destined to play in the world, God placed them in a very strategic position geographically. At the time their ancestors were delivered from Egyptian slavery and became a nation,

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Moses, their great prophet-deliverer, set forth a great truth in these words:

When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel (Deut. 32:8).

The world owes much to the Hebrews. They had a literature before some other nations had letters. When God called Abraham, He promised that he would become a great nation and that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3). His great grandsons were later driven by drought into the Nile Valley, and their posterity eventually became a nation of slaves to the Egyptians.

Combining statesmanship with prophetic vision, Moses, a Hebrew by birth and also an Egyptian prince by training, led this nation forth to freedom. When they reached the base of Mt. Sinai they received their divine commission. But before they could be used as God's tools to carry the news of salvation to the world, they had to be shaped and tested. So the rough iron of this Semitic people was first welded into unity by being heated in the flames of war, beaten under the blows of despots, and later plunged into the hissing waters of exile. Then as tempered steel, they came forth to do a special work for God and mankind.

The well-known free thinker, H. G. Wells, who was certainly not a Jew nor a member of any other religious group, declared positively that in all these eventual centuries,

One people only held together. . . and they were able to do this because they had got together this literature of theirs, their Bible. It is not so much the Jews who made the Bible as the Bible which made the Jews. . .

The Jews were a new thing, a people. . . held together and consolidated out of the

heterogenous elements by nothing but the power of the written word. . .

Not only a new kind of community, but a new kind of man comes into history with the development of the Jews. . .

The Hebrew prophets. . . mark the appearance of a new power in the world, the power of individual moral appeal" (*A Short History of the World*, pp. 123-126).

Among those prophets none was more important than Isaiah. Through him God said, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. . . I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:3, 6). Then again we read, "I have put my spirit upon him: that he may bring forth judgment to the Gentiles," or as Moffatt translates it, Isaiah 42, Verse 1, "to carry true religion to the nations."

Such was the divine purpose in the establishment of this people. Salvation never was for just one nation alone, but for the people of every nation. Again we read,

The Lord GOD which gathered the outcasts of Israel saith, yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him (Isaiah 56:8).

Yes, the Hebrews were commissioned to be the custodians of God's message of salvation to the very ends of the earth.

Privileges, however, always bring responsibilities. Moses stated the situation very clearly in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, where he sets forth the Law of Blessings and Cursings. If they would obey God and keep His statutes, they would be blessed above all people. But if they disobeyed, they would be driven out and scattered into every nation.

When the Roman army, led by Titus, invaded Palestine in A.D. 70, his conquest led to the nation's complete subjugation. The temple and parts of the city

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were destroyed. Then, sixty-five years later what was left of Jerusalem was leveled to the ground and the people either killed or sold into slavery. Thus the prophecy of Moses in Deuteronomy 28 was fulfilled. He said:

And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other (v. 64). The Lord shall bring a nation against thee... as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand (v. 49).

Attempts were made a few years later by certain Jewish leaders to assert the independence of the Jews and to seize control of Jerusalem. Bar-Kochba, who was hailed as a false Messiah, for example, led a desperate effort that lasted from A.D. 132-135. He nearly succeeded. It required a long war to suppress the revolt. The Emperor Hadrian finally quelled the uprising and utterly destroyed the city. Dr. E. W. Bullinger says "So great was the relief which Rome experienced by the suppression of Jerusalem and the Jews, that the toast became common at Roman feasts that when the soldiers returned to Rome, their slogan of victory was *Hierosolyma est Perdita!* "Jerusalem is destroyed." He also points out that they took the first letter of each word, and made another word. Then in exaltation would shout "Hep! Hep! Hurrah!" an expression still with us although its origin has long since been forgotten.

To commemorate the victory, the temple area was plowed and another temple to Jupiter built on the very site. Then when the Mohammedans occupied Palestine, they erected in A.D. 691 the Dome of the Rock, sometimes mistakenly called the Mosque of Omar, and also the Mosque of Al-Aksa in A.D. 693, two of their most important spiritual centers in the Moslem world. These still occupy the sacred spot where Solomon's Temple stood.

During succeeding centuries, the Jews were considered by some as the scapegoat of the nations. Anything unfortunate that happened was blamed on them. They

were looked upon as the offscouring of the earth. Driven into ghettos, they eked out a pathetic existence.

Lord Byron's picture of these downtrodden people is descriptive:

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall we flee away and be at rest.
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave.
Mankind their country — Israel but the grave.

Even in this they were fulfilling the words of another Hebrew prophet who said, "The people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Numbers 23:9).

Minority peoples scattered among larger groups are generally absorbed. But the Jewish people have never been completely absorbed by any nation. Like the Gulf Stream, they mingle but they never lose their identity. Even in America, "the melting pot of the nations," the Jews are still a people — they do not melt. Dean Inge of St. Paul's Cathedral in London stated a great truth during the Hitler persecutions when he said: "The Jews have always lived to stand at the graveside of their enemies." Like an island in the sea, these people have withstood the tempests and the tides. But when each storm has passed, they are still there. During the tragic days of World War II there seemed little hope for their survival for persecution had reached tidal wave proportions. Hitler rose to power on a tide of quenchless greed and a torrent of manic oratory. He passed from history, a sadist and a murderer. But the Jews are still with us.

One of their own writers, Michael Beers, expressed it eloquently:

Braving all kinds of torments — the pangs of death, the still more terrible pangs of life — we have withstood the impetuous storm of time, sweeping indiscriminately in its course nations, religions and countries. . . We alone have been

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spared by the indiscriminating hand of time. Like a column left standing amid the wrecks of worlds and the ruins of nature. The history of our people connects present times with the first ages of the world. . . It begins at the cradle of mankind; it is likely to be preserved to the very day of universal destruction.

Now why is this? What gives this people such genius for adaptability and versatility? Downtrodden as they have been, they seem always to adjust themselves to their various environments. The reason could be that in their hearts there has always been the hope that they will return again to their homeland. Their destiny was clearly outlined by their prophets. Historian H. G. Wells, as already quoted, states it clearly

It was not the Jews who made the Bible, but the
Bible which made the Jews.

The genius of Israel to survive and adapt themselves is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. But what is God's purpose for this people? What is their final destiny? To answer these and many related questions is the objective of this book.

A great deal is being written these days about the Jews, much of which could never pass the test of "rightly dividing the word of truth." Take the great prophecy of the Olivet Discourse as a vital example. Details concerning the coming overthrow of Jerusalem by the Romans and the scattering of the Jewish nations were clearly predicted. This occurred in A.D. 70 and A.D. 135. The prediction that "the abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet would one day "stand in the holy place," was fulfilled.

No doubt was left in the minds of those hearers as to what was meant for their attention was immediately drawn to the prophecies of Daniel. Note the clarity of these words:

So when you see "the abomination of desolation," of which the prophet Daniel spoke, . . . then those who are in Judea must take to the hills. If a man is on the roof [*the flat roofs of those days*] he must not come down to fetch his goods from the house; if in the field, he must not turn back for his coat. . . . Pray that it may not be winter when you have to make your escape, or Sabbath. It will be a time of great distress. (Matthew 24:15-20 N.E.B.)

This prophecy concerning the "abomination of desolation" standing "in the holy place" was completely fulfilled when the Roman army, led by Cestius, undermined the walls of Jerusalem and brought the Roman standards right into the sacred precincts of the Temple.

Describing what happened, Phillip H. Gosse says:

At that very crisis [the Roman General] withdrew without any perceptible reason, when an hour or two might have made him the undisputed lord of the city. Cestius suddenly drew off all his army and retired without the walls. The action of the Roman general was so utterly unaccountable that the Jewish historian who records it is lost in admiration of it and is constrained to acknowledge the immediate interference of God (*History of the Jews*, Phillip Henry Gosse, 1851 Ed.).

He further emphasizes that it was the retreat of Cestius that "opened a sudden and brief way of escape" for those who believed the warning. "Some fled to the mountains of Perea beyond Jordan and others to the vastnesses of Lebanon." This happened in A.D. 70.

For nearly forty years, God's people living in the Judean area had been praying that their flight would "not be in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day" (Matt. 24:20). And how wonderfully their prayers were answered for the attack by the Romans came not in the winter but

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during the month of October. And it was on Friday, the 30th of Tisri, that Cestius "took the lower city and besieged the palace." History reveals that the siege lasted five days, which as Gosse points out would be Tuesday. The next day, Wednesday, he made his assault on the Temple placing his royal standards in the sacred precincts of the Temple — "the holy place."

But then, suddenly, he withdrew his army and retreated. From that Wednesday until the following Saturday "the Jews were in hot pursuit of the fleeing foe as far as Antipatris" (Ibid. see also Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book II, pages 640-641). All details that were foretold, as well as certain prophecies in the book of Daniel, were fulfilled to the letter, giving marvelous confirmation of "the sure word of prophecy" (II Peter 1:19). We wonder why certain expounders of God's word, apparently overlooking the facts of history, declare that this prophecy is still to be fulfilled at some future time. Some claim that prophecies sometimes have a dual application. To this we gladly concede. But whatever secondary interpretation might be possible, it is essential that we recognize its primary application. Actually the greater part of the prophecy, in Matthew 24, had already been fulfilled in detail during the Jewish war of A.D. 66-70. But some, overlooking these facts of history, have ventured into areas of unfulfilled prophecy and, drawing on their own imaginations, make fantastic claims for future fulfillments which go far beyond the clear revelations of Scripture. Others, for many years, have declared that the Jews would never go back to their original home-land and that they would never become a nation again. But they have gone back; Israel is a strong nation today. Why? And what, if any, is the significance of this?

The facts of history set forth in the succeeding chapters point up the need for real care in handling this subject. At times things have gotten into print concerning Israel and her future which, to say the least, are regrettable and bear scant resemblance to the real picture God has set forth so definitely in His Word. Important things are yet to happen in the land of Israel as is evident

from the study of Bible prophecy, but we must be sure we are "rightly dividing the word of truth" both doctrinally and prophetically. The Bible says, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. " How greatly we need that spiritual guidance today. Just as truly as the many great events occurring in and around Jerusalem were to be recognized as signs of the impending destruction by the Romans in 70 A.D., so events in modern Israel today are the key to a correct understanding of the tremendous prophecy that, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). How relevant are those words of counsel: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always!" (Verse 36).

And what a lot there is to watch these days! That startling undertaking - "Operation Thunderbolt" - at Entebbe airport, Uganda, July 4, 1976, not only saved the lives of more than one hundred doomed hostages but gained the respect if not the admiration of the whole civilized world. We have all been made aware of the courage and skill of the Israelies, as William Stevenson says in his Introduction to *90 Minutes at Entebbe*, "Israel understands, in a way that the rest of us do not, the dimensions and the awful future of international terrorism." King Solomon expressed it well in Proverbs 24:5,6 when he said: "Wisdom prevails over strength, knowledge over brute force, for wars are won by skillful strategy."

So now we move on to the story of Israel today.

Chapter Two

ISRAEL AND THE ENERGY CRISIS

The editorial in *The Jerusalem Post* Wednesday, September 26, 1973, contained some sage and sobering reflections. It was the eve of Rosh Hashana 5734. Little did Israel know that before that solemn day was over, the nation would be at war. "There are grave problems for us to think about," wrote the editor. (And we would add, graver than the editor himself knew.) Continuing, he said, "for most Israelis the next three days without newspapers, with relatively few opportunities to escape into 'the latest news' should provide a good opportunity for meditating on our past, present, and future." How true! But before many of those papers reached their destinations, the Yom Kippur War was at its height. This is the most sacred day of the Jewish year, but by noon the nation was fighting for its life on three fronts. "We violated one Sabbath in order to be able to observe many more Sabbaths," is the way one Jewish writer expressed it.

All the world knows the outcome of that bitter conflict. While the Yom Kippur War of 1973 lasted longer than the Six Day War of 1967, the results were just as real. One of the most important outgrowths of this last war has been the bringing into unity of the Arab nations who control the bulk of the world's oil resources. For the first time in their history, these people have discovered the

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tremendous bargaining power of that commodity. It was disappointing but not surprising that in November of that year these nations reduced their production of oil far below their previous norm. This was to place an embargo on the nations showing favor to Israel, especially the United States and the Netherlands. Some observers are already declaring that a new war has begun, an economic war. And this in turn is affecting almost every industrialized nation. Thus the Middle East, in recent decades, has become the focus of world attention.

Gasoline shortages are affecting the life style as well as the economic prosperity of not only the United States but to an even greater degree Europe and Japan. These countries are almost wholly dependent on imported oil. With the Arab nations holding approximately two-thirds of the world's known oil reserves, it is easy to foresee a tremendous concentration of power in these lands.

In 1974, Russian oil totaled 42 billion barrels while the United States total was 36 billion barrels. Yet the potential production of Arab oil is 390 billion barrels! Kuwait, one of the smallest countries, produces 74 billion barrels while Iran and Iraq together total 95 billion barrels. But think of Saudi Arabia's output — 137 billion barrels!

It is true the United States has some of the largest known untapped oil deposits, yet to utilize these reserves involves tremendous expense and creates many problems, as we see in the Alaskan Pipeline. It has been far less expensive and much easier to depend on oil from outside sources, especially Arab oil, than to undertake extracting oil from the more difficult areas. Time, too, is an important factor. Knowing this and in an effort to thwart the help given to Israel by friendly nations, the oil-producing Arab nations have suddenly cut back their supplies and at the same time they demand Israel's complete withdrawal from Jerusalem and all the land she is now occupying, which has come into her possession as the result of recent wars.

To enforce these demands and to impress the world with the importance of their claims, the Arab nations

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have not only cut back supplies, they have also increased tremendously the price of oil which has suddenly skyrocketed from \$1 or at most \$3 a barrel to as much as \$17 a barrel! Annual oil exported from the Middle East has jumped from 15 billion dollars to 89 billion dollars. Shortages of supply coupled with the enormous rise in prices naturally focuses attention on Israel causing some to wonder concerning the possibility of a new anti-Semitism. One thing is certain, the Middle East has suddenly vaulted into a dominant position in the world of industry and commerce. Possessing as they do two-thirds of the known oil reserves of the world, Israel's neighbors are now in a position to make demands out of all proportion to their size and population.

As we look back over the years we can see some strange things have resulted from the four Arab-Israeli conflicts. Growing out of each of the wars - 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 - Israel lengthened her borders. For example, before 1967, Israel possessed 8,000 square miles. But after that war, her territory had extended to 34,000 square miles and her population had doubled. More important still is the fact that after nineteen centuries the city of Jerusalem has again become her capital.

By comparison, Israel is still a small nation with less than three million. But her Arab neighbors total more than 110 million. While small numerically, Israel is nevertheless a nation to be reckoned with as has been demonstrated in each of the wars she has been forced to fight. The Yom Kippur War of 1973 would have undoubtedly ended very differently had not the United Nations brought pressure upon her. The "cease-fire" demanded by the United Nations under special pressure from Russia and the United States, was actually a great disappointment to the Israeli military leaders, for they had planned and envisioned invasions of both Cairo and Damascus and were angry with their government leaders for complying with the demand to end hostilities.

Through all the centuries of wandering, the Jews have cherished the hope of getting back to the land of their fathers. Significantly, during the wars of 1956 and

1967, Radio Jerusalem broadcasted again and again these words of the prophet Amos: "And I will restore the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and live in them, they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them in their land, and they shall not be rooted out from the land which I have given them, said the Lord your God" (Amos 9:14-15, NASV).

The most casual observer will recognize that this promise could not possibly apply to the return of the Jews after the Babylonian captivity because five centuries later they were rooted out by the Romans and scattered among all nations. Not since A.D. 70 when the Roman armies drove the Jews from the land, have the Jews been in possession of Palestine. But today the picture is different. The Israelis are back in the land God gave to their fathers. In spite of being regarded as the world's outcasts, and while being driven, scourged, plundered, and tormented, this nation has ever cherished the hope that one day they would get back to the land from which they had been driven. The big question now is: Can they hold the land? Some are wondering if the neighboring Arab nations might use the oil crisis or some future crisis to stir up so much public sentiment against them that they will not be able to remain there.

The biggest problem in any final settlement between Jews and Arabs is of course bound up with problems within Palestine itself. Without going into the pros and cons of this perplexing situation, the nations of the world should become not only more aware of the issues involved, but should do their utmost to find a solution acceptable to both Arabs and Jews. At present it is a festering sore which seems to defy all attempts to find a remedy.

We have already mentioned that deep in the heart of every loyal Jew has been the hope of again possessing the Holy Land. But also deep in the heart of some Arabs, especially in recent decades, has been the hope, even the determination, that the Israelis will be driven into the sea, and thus all Palestine will again belong to the Arabs.

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Just before the Six Day War of 1967, Egypt and Syria were armed with the most modern implements of war. Russia had invested more than three billion dollars in military equipment in readiness for the invasion. "Israel must be destroyed," was the slogan. And by comparison, it seemed that that is what would happen. But as the result of these conflicts Israel became more deeply entrenched than ever, and the desert was littered for hundreds of miles with the debris of war -- demolished tanks, crushed fighter planes, and more horrifying still, the bodies of thousands of men who had fallen in the desperate struggle.

During the years that followed, Israel's neighbors were armed to the teeth. With more than twenty thousand Russian personnel resident in Egypt in 1972 a military take-over seemed almost certain. But the unexpected happened. Before the outbreak of hostilities President Anwar Sadat of Egypt decided that all Russian military advisors must leave the country. That strange turn of events expressed Egypt's determination to seek cooperation elsewhere.

In view of these modern decisions it is not difficult to understand former President Nixon's visit to Egypt and other Middle East countries, to say nothing of Dr. Kissinger's tireless efforts to bring about a settlement in that troubled area of the world.

History may well prove that deeper factors lie hidden in all these arrangements. And it surely is significant that the man who has done more to bring peace, not only to the Middle East, but to other areas where war has been raging is himself a Jew! This man's ability to fraternize with all parties irrespective of national barriers was phenomenal.

Whatever may be the final outcome, the nationalizing of the oil industry in Arab lands seems to have been for the one purpose of bringing pressure upon the United States and other friendly nations to withdraw their support for Israel. Consequently, a new diplomacy has arisen in the Middle East, completely upsetting the balance of power in the world. Just what this will mean

for the future time alone will tell. But the world's two super-powers lined up as they are, supporting opposite groups, calls for a dramatic re-alignment of national strengths which some Bible students feel could well lead into the final showdown of the world's strength as depicted in the books of Ezekiel and the Revelation. Chapters 18 and 19 of this volume unfold Ezekiel's great prophecy, showing the final scenes in this world's warring, tragic history.

Control of the Middle East has long been the ambition of Russia whose support for the Arabs is certainly not just humanitarian; it is a vital part of her foreign diplomacy. Control of the world's largest oil reserves is to her imperative. When Israel's final enemy comes against the land just before the end of the age, it will not be just one nation but a confederacy of powers coming "to take a spoil, . . . to take a prey" (Ezekiel 38:12).

Enormous wealth is concentrated in this little land concerning which Hebrew prophets wrote twenty-five or thirty centuries ago. At that time, however, they could not possibly have known the real wealth of Israel as the world knows it today. Our industrial and scientific age has made approximate evaluations which reveal that the wealth is really beyond computation.

One informed writer declared years ago that "Palestine will yet be the most coveted international prize of the ages." Some impressive figures are set forth in our next chapter.

Adding the wealth of Israel, both in minerals and agriculture, to the enormous oil reserves of the Middle East makes it easy to see that this area will hold a dominant place as a major center of the world. Many today are wondering if the oil crisis will eventually lead to a world crisis. Oil has recently become a weapon. People speak glibly about "the Arab oil weapon." And it is, but what kind of a weapon? It could become a weapon against poverty, against hunger, and a dozen other things. While we grieve to see forlorn Arab children suffering in wretched poverty, we wonder why certain neighboring countries exporting millions of gallons of oil every day

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seem to be doing little to alleviate the sufferings of refugees. Money for oil has certainly become a military weapon against Israel. Many feel it could and should be a weapon against the dire poverty seen in so many areas throughout some of the Arab territories.

The recent counsels between Egypt and Israel in an effort to bring peace to this troubled area of the world are actually one of the most encouraging events in more than a century.

As this volume goes to press, God-fearing people of all religious faiths are praying that a better understanding among the nations of the Middle East will eventuate. Egypt and Israel have each played major roles in the development of our civilization. Let us hope their future contributions will be as influential.

Chapter Three

ISRAEL'S MARVELOUS MINERAL WEALTH

Although it is a very small country geographically, the Hebrew prophets declared Israel to be a land of great mineral deposits. The Lord through Ezekiel called it "The glory of all lands."

Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord. . . I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt unto a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands" (Ezekiel 20:3, 6).

That expression "milk and honey," first used by Moses, is regarded by some as a figure of speech referring to the area's great wealth in both minerals and agriculture. In Deuteronomy 8:7-9, God's promise was very real.

For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a

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land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills
thou mayest dig brass.

A few years ago Dana Adams Schmidt, Tel Aviv correspondent for the *New York Times*, went into this "Bible Country" to get the facts concerning Israel's mineral wealth. Here is a summary of her report:

Rarely have a people been so conscious of an expressive past as the Israelis. Biblical history and prophecy explain and give meaning to their presence as an independent nation. From Biblical accounts, historical annals and archaeological research the Israelis derive not only spiritual inspiration but physical guidance for charting the future of their fledgling country.

Not the least of the problems for present-day Israel is how to achieve economic self-sufficiency in a land promised, according to the word of Moses as set down in Deuteronomy, to be "a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."

David Ben-Gurion, first Prime Minister of modern Israel, constantly reminded his people that the Bible is indeed the guide toward realizing Israel's destiny. He said,

This inspired book contains the secrets of the past concealed in mounds and rocks and desert caves within the present Jewish state and the stark needs of existence demand that the natural resources hidden underground and in the waters of lakes and seas be fully disclosed.

For thousands of years Ben-Gurion's people have been reading in Deuteronomy of their homeland's natural riches but it was not until the army of Israel took possession of this area that the Prime Minister's conviction was confirmed about how much information

there is in the Bible about Israel which remains absolutely accurate. He said:

"I knew what was written in the Bible about this Negev area was true, and was guided accordingly. The writers of the Bible would not have referred to copper and iron simply as a matter of rhetoric. But it was not until the army of Israel won the Negev that its copper and iron were actually discovered. . . But," he added, "we are still at the very beginning of our explorations." *New York Times Magazine*.

Expeditions of scientists, sent in after the war, justified Ben-Gurion's belief in the Negev. He also declared that, "In addition to iron and copper, rich deposits of other minerals not mentioned, so far as we know in the Bible have been found." Climaxing his remarks, he said: "The best of guides to the land except for the land itself is the Bible."

Dana Schmidt reminds us that in the reign of Solomon, King David's son, from 971 to 931 B.C. the scorching Wadi Araba was alive with workmen. But with the subsequent overthrow of the kingdom of Judah, these mines were abandoned. However, during the last years the whole area is again astir with miners and caravans. Solomon's wisdom was revealed in that he concentrated his energies upon these resources and developed his trade with the East, instead of trying to compete with the greater powers of Egypt and Phoenicia in the Mediterranean. This brought great wealth to the country.

In 1 Kings 10:23, we read:

So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

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Verse 21:

And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold.

Verse 14 says:

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold.

Verse 16:

And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went into one target.

Verse 18:

Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

According to these statements Solomon's wealth was tremendous. His annual income was 666 talents of gold. With each talent weighing 60 pounds it is not difficult to see what this would mean. Archaeologists declare that a talent equals 30.3 kilograms and that would be 60 pounds of our weight. Each year he received 20,179 kilograms of solid gold. Think what that would mean at the world's market prices today — over twenty-four million U.S. dollars! No wonder the Scripture says that the king had so much gold that "silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." As for copper and brass, "Solomon left all the vessels unweighed because they were exceedingly many; neither was the weight of the brass found out."

Undoubtedly much of this wealth was accumulated by way of tribute from Syria and other countries, as well as through international trade. It is really difficult for us to comprehend so much annual wealth.

In his book, *The Other Side of the Jordan*, Professor Nelson Glueck informs us: "There is evidence of mining and smelting by King Solomon, his predecessors and his

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successors, at some 40 different sites in the Araba. Some were centered around the Biblical Punon in the northern half, and some around the southern end. The southern end became the largest and richest copper mining and smelting center in the entire Araba. And it is the same today."

Here in the middle of a dry wadi of red, yellow, and white shale, an energetic explorer can climb up into Solomon's fortress, a kind of acropolis, set on top of a flat-topped hill that juts sharply out of the floor of the wadi. This was a strong point from which soldiers protected the mining and smelting operations from guerilla raids conducted by Hada, the Edomite, who had fled from David into Egypt.

In this, as in many other respects, little has changed. Throughout the Negev one can see modern Israelis traveling in armed convoys always on the lookout for infiltrators.

Glueck also informs us that the Israeli Mining Company, assisted by Belgian experts, sank a shaft 78 feet deep into the mountainside some time ago because they had noted promising veins of copper ore. When special ventilating equipment arrived from America the miners were able to dig deeper. Then about 200 yards from the entrance to the shaft, the company began at another point. This was open-cast mining and all within the site of two ancient smelters from King Solomon's time. Moreover, these prospectors have turned up a number of new and even better veins at a dozen previously unknown places where King Solomon and others had mined and smelted.

A mineral of which Solomon probably had no knowledge — manganese — has also been found just a few miles from the copper mines. The test borings have proved very promising. While this ore is bulky, yet it could be carried by truck to Elath and from there could be exported to the world's markets. Commercial exploitation is certainly possible here.

Another promise for the future has recently occurred at a different place, some 40 miles to the north of the

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copper workings, where iron ore deposits have been discovered of a very high value. The topsy-turvy formation of the earth's crust in the Negev reveals veins of iron ore formed deep in the earth; while few of these are now being mined they are clearly discernible. This is all part of the grand vision which has been taking shape in the minds of thousands of Israelis — from the Prime Minister down to the 10th grader. Guided by statements in God's Word and encouraged by what they see in their mind's eye, they are all eager to unearth the glories of an ancient past. They are already aware of a complicated system of irrigation for crops and cattle ranches. Phosphate, sulphur, feldspar, kaolin, copper, manganese, and iron ore mines are changing the whole aspect of the country. Thriving towns and new industries are springing up all over the little land of Israel.

Moses declared theirs would be "a land flowing with milk and honey" and a land "whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." This means a great deal more for modern Israelis than it could possibly have meant for the people in the time of Moses. Our industrial age gives new value to these rich mineral resources, richer than the human mind can even imagine. A brief look at the mineral wealth as quoted from the *Economic Bulletin* of Israel, Vol. V, Nos. 3 and 4, will convince us that it is indeed a land of rich deposits. Here are some of the classifications:

PHOSPHATES: "One of the largest deposits discovered to date is that of phosphates. The quantities known to exist in the Great Crater are sufficient to supply the country's need of this raw material for years." The output of phosphate rock has sufficed for the processing of 30,000 tons of super phosphates a year. The anticipated output per year is 120,000 tons which will cover all home needs.

SILICATE SAND & BALL CLAY: "Two other minerals that have been discovered in quantities extensive enough to meet domestic requirements for years to come are silicate sand and ball clay. . . There are over a million tons of known deposits of silicate in the Great Crater. The

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present consumption is 12,000 tons annually and is expected to climb to 30-40,000 tons eventually.

"With respect to ball clay, which is used in the manufacture of earthenware, known deposits aggregate 300,000 tons, while annual requirements are 6,000 tons at present and an estimated 15-20,000 tons in the near future."

COPPER AND MANGANESE: "These efforts revealed the presence of copper deposits which were estimated at 200,000 tons and which may possibly reach as high as 450,000 tons."

IRON: "Tests indicated an estimated deposit of 15-20 million tons."

FELDSPAR: "Although local requirements of feldspar are comparatively small, about 1,000 to 2,000 tons annually, the presence of this mineral near Elath provides the country with yet another raw material."

ESTIMATES OF OTHER MINERALS IN ISRAEL

1,300 million tons of Potash	
valued at.....	\$17,940,000,000
853 million tons of Bromide	
valued at.....	\$460,620,000,000
11,900 million tons of Salt	
valued at.....	\$23,324,000,000
81 million tons of Gypsum	
valued at.....	\$1,863,000,000
22 million tons of Magnesium Chloride	
valued at.....	\$5,170,000,000,000
400,000 tons of Pure Copper	
(two mines only)	
valued at.....	\$240,000,000
TOTAL	\$5,673,987,000,000

In the *New York Times* April 12, 1949, appeared this comment of Gene Currivan writing from Tel-Aviv, "Sodom, Biblical spot on the southern end of the Dead Sea, lowest body of water on earth, is preparing once again to serve the world with its chemicals." Then he adds, "From there. . .the world's most ample supply of potash — used for explosives in wartime and fertilizer in peacetime — was expected."

Estimates of other minerals in Israel were furnished from *Estimated Price Per Ton* by William E. Tufts of the Schnell Publishing Company, 30 Church Street, New York, New York.

Iron ore was also discovered in Galilee, plus oil in many places. Thus Israel's wealth is far in excess of (6 trillion) \$6,000,000,000,000. The mineral wealth of the U.S. has an estimated value of about 2 to 3 trillion dollars. It is not hard for us to understand why certain nations today are coveting this little land in the Middle East.

In his impressive volume, *Through Turmoil to Peace*, A. W. Anderson, having spent much time making personal observations, described this area some years ago and the changes that were already in evidence. He cited the *American Watchman*:

For ages Palestine has been a poverty-stricken land, a barren, desolate waste, with ruined cities and little else but historic memories. . .But by the religious zeal and fervor of the Jewish colonists, coupled with the financial help of their co-religionists in all parts of the world, to restore their ancient land to its former glory. . .a mighty transformation is being wrought.

Jewish scientists are discovering untold wealth in the Dead Sea, and if estimates are correct, Palestine is destined to become fabulously wealthy.

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The potential wealth of the Dead Sea is more than two and four-fifths times greater than all the eminent riches of fortunate America. This means that Palestine is destined to see the most stupendous development ever heard of. . . it will make this land the base of the biggest enterprise undertaking of any nation. Such a development is bound to make Palestine a more coveted prize than any other land in the world (*Through Turmoil to Peace*, pp. 311-312).

How much has happened since these words were penned! No longer is this land called Palestine, a name given it by the Romans, but Israel, the name given by God to Jacob. Set as it is in "the middle of the earth," to use the prophet Ezekiel's expression, this little country is felt by some to be destined to see even greater developments in the near future, a development which could make it the envy of the world - a "coveted international prize"! Who could have imagined that this little land, which from earliest human history has been a bridge between the Orient and the Occident, the cradle site of world religions, would in these tumultuous days become so important. It is not so much Jewish events but rather Jewish thought that has made such an impact on civilization.

A recent U.S. Geological Survey claims to have found King Solomon's legendary gold mines in western Saudi Arabia, according to *World Coin News*, June 22, 1976:

Although many mines scattered throughout the region may have contributed gold to King Solomon's treasury, the principal producer and most likely candidate to be the famed Biblical Ophir is the Madh adh Dhahab (Cradle of Gold) mine, located about midway between Mecca and Medina.

Between 1972 and 1975, the geologists found thousands of crude tools and vast quantities of mineral

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deposits. This new site is not proven as yet, but either here or in the Negev area in Israel lies the secret of Solomon's enormous wealth.

As will be shown in later chapters, what the Hebrew prophets foretold concerning the last of the "last days" is rapidly coming to pass. In fact the greatest event of the ages is just ahead.

Chapter Four

FURTHER DISCOVERIES IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL

While this little nation often makes front page news, few realize the *reason*. It is impressive to note what editors, journalists, scientists, and educators have to say on this point.

Blake Clark in the *Reader's Digest* of March 28, 1954, claimed that to the Israelis the Bible is not only a source of inspiration but a guide to the forgotten wealth of their country. He quoted the words of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, the foremost builder of modern Israel, who said: "This book has lived in the hearts of Jews for centuries and indeed the Bible is more than ever important to this nation — but in a somewhat different sense. Relying on its historical accuracy we are using it today to discover wealth long forgotten." Blake continues, "It was once assumed that the new country of Israel had no metal. But Professor Nelson Glueck, a Biblical archaeologist and President of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, thought differently. He was fascinated by the account of King Solomon's foundry in 1 Kings, chapter 7, verses 45-46.

And all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the Lord, were of bright brass [*copper*]. In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground.

The word "brass," Glueck knew, was a mistranslation for "copper." If the mines from which King Solomon got this copper had ever existed, they had disappeared from the memory of man for almost 3000 years. But Glueck believed they had been there. To find them this scholar spent more than 20 years in Palestine, following the Bible's directions. Up and down this simmering Jordan Valley he went, and across the hot Negev.

One blistering day, exploring a few miles south of the Dead Sea, Rabbi Glueck came upon a ruined site which local Arabs said their ancestors had called "Copper Ruin." He excavated hopefully. Soon walls crumbled and furnaces, black with heaps of copper slag, proved it to be a once great copper smelter. Farther south, Glueck found seven similar centers. Pottery in all of them was from the time of Solomon. Here, at last, were King Solomon's famous mines.

But Glueck, this persistent prober, was not satisfied with that. He excavated other areas and found a phenomenal processing site near the gulf of Agabah. This was located at the center of a geological rift, and this was for a very definite purpose. The wind, blowing down this natural corridor, was able to fan the flames of the furnaces. These strong winds evidently had much to do with the refining of the ore. The Ezion-geber of Scripture, the one-time Pittsburgh of Israel had been located. "To find it I literally followed the Bible's description," said Glueck. "Ezion-geber is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom," declares the Scripture (I Kings 9:26).

At a later date Dr. Ben Tor, one of Israel's leading geologists, with a group of technicians studied and evaluated these ancient copper mines. As far back as 1949, they proved the existence of ore sufficient to yield 100,000 tons of metallic copper. And they estimated that another 200,000 tons or more of this valuable metal could be found in the same area.

Little wonder then, that miner's camps with jeeps

FURTHER DISCOVERIES IN ISRAEL

and trucks swarm in clouds of yellow dust while bearded miners, sunburned but enthusiastic, swing their picks and shovels. The Chief Mining Engineer, Abraham Dor, says, "Whenever we find the richest outcroppings we come upon the slag and furnaces of Solomon's miners. We often get the feeling that someone has just left." It is significant that on the wall of the camp's wooden shack office we find framed this passage from Deuteronomy 8:7-9:

For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land: a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass [or copper.]

Then Blake asks, "What of the other promise in this passage, the promise of the iron?" Then he goes on to tell how, a few miles from Beersheba, Dr. Ben Tor discovered immense cliffs shot through with red-black ore. The technicians, after analyzing hundreds of samples, have estimated that there are at least 15 million tons of low-grade iron ore in this area, much of which, in case of higher world prices, could be very profitably dug. Not only that but engineers also found a mile long outcropping of an excellent ore, 60-65 percent pure iron.

Recently there has been much prospecting for oil in Israel. Again they took their lead from the Bible. In Genesis, chapter 19, they read:

Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. . . and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

Hard-headed businessmen like Ziel Federman and others believe that these rising flames meant natural gas and, of course, natural gas indicates oil. A company was organized and sent with geologists into this area. Sure enough, evidence proved that there was oil in that area. Israel's first oil well was drilled November 3, 1953. Although the supply is not outstanding, rapid strides have

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been made to make what there is available.

For many centuries, this section in the southern portion of Palestine was regarded as waste land irreclaimable for agriculture. But things are different today. As we traveled through that area recently we could hardly believe our eyes, for what was just a barren waste a few years ago is today alive with settlers. In fact archaeologists have established the presence of more than 70 ancient settlement sites in one 65-mile stretch of the Jordan Valley alone. Each of these had its own well for water supply. It was no exaggeration then when I or "lifted up his eyes, and he saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord." That was the picture in the ancient days.

We might ask, why is Israel not as fertile as it was back in earlier days? If we recall how many times this land has been overrun by armies, we will understand. Invasion after invasion has destroyed not only the cities but also the forest and farm lands and dispersed the permanent settlers. When the land's surface is destroyed and the grass has been uprooted, the terraces soon disintegrate and sands move in and clog the wells. We must also remember that, God withdrew His blessings because of Israel's disobedience (Deuteronomy 28: 1-42). Today, however, the new settlers reason that since the present devastation was largely man-made, man by his ingenuity and hard work can reverse the order. Said one farmer from the village of Sde Boker: "If the ancient Israelite could prosper here so can we."

All the way from Dan to Beersheba, ancient sites have been rediscovered by Biblical archaeologists. The words of journalist Blake Clark are pertinent. Describing these areas he said, "At nearly every one you see a small, cube-shaped pumping station set over an ancient spring or well." Hagar's well, where Abraham's cast-off wife stopped with her son, Ishmael, now supplies the water for a large group of pioneering Rumanian-Jewish families settled on a little hill station about a mile away. We are heartened by the report that "the government is currently linking these Biblical wells into a larger system. . ."

The ancient wealth of the land of Israel is being rediscovered and while, as we have said, many Jews have come to the land of their fathers with little or no faith in the Holy Scriptures, yet the very things that are happening in this land are compelling many to take a new view of the great statements of their ancient prophets. One of the professors from the Hebrew University told us at the Jerusalem Conference on Bible Prophecy, "The prophets have shown us where our roots are but we must never forget it is 'not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.' " His statement reflects the deep thoughts of many of the educators and leaders of the nation today.

Sde Boker, in the Negev, is known as a "dry farming area." But by conserving their water supply, experimental farmers have proved successful in their efforts of bringing from this barren section a fine harvest of corn, enormous sunflowers, and even watermelons.

Those were the people of old time whose skill in storing water and distributing it enabled them to build a pastoral civilization in these Negev hills more than 2000 years ago. This is an area of harsh yellow hills and rolling dusty valleys, basking under a cloudless, blue sky. But to motor through this area and see the fields of corn and sunflowers waving their green and gold flags over the arid highland is a thrilling sight.

This land, which for centuries had been destroyed by invading armies, where improvident farmers and ubiquitous goats had made bare the forests, is now alive and beautiful. Its sharp maritime landscapes dotted with intense concentration of verdure rivals even Sydney's North Shore or Table Mountain. But it is a struggle to keep Israel's ecological appeal in the minds of an "immigrant society." It is not generally known that alongside Israel's workers are many Arabs who in 1969 numbered 9,000. The next year, 1970, the number grew to 24,000. By 1972, it was 35,000. Today more than 40,000 Arabs enter Israel from Samaria, Gaza and Jordan every work day.

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Abba Eban in his excellent book, *My Country*, states the case well:

“When Israel was established in 1948, some 165,000 Arabs and Druze declined, or failed to join the exodus . . . but they managed to transcend the hostility [of their fellow Arabs] by giving first place to their private or family welfare.

The Arabs of Israel have lived at a high rate of growth. They now number some 450,000. They combine the Arab tradition of large families with Israeli social and health services that keep the death-rate low. Thus they have become the most rapidly growing community in the world. They have full citizenship with representation in the Knesset, and the Israeli Government and parliament accept vigilant responsibility for their security and welfare. Israeli Arabs are not expected to fulfil any military service since this implies a duty to take up arms against their fellow-Arabs. The Druze join the army with fierce devotion and are among Israel's most passionate defenders . . . The Israeli policy is not one of assimilation; it does not aim to de-Arabize the Arabs or to force them into identification with Zionist aims . . .

To have achieved by 1970 an average per capita consumption of 3,920 Israel Pounds, which is higher than the corresponding figure in Japan and many European countries or any country in Latin America, testifies to the pace of Israel's achievement . . . Somebody who knew what Israel looked like in its first year would have difficulty in recognizing it in its twenty-fifth.” The peaceful progressive spirit everywhere throughout the land of Israel is one of the happiest discoveries a visitor can make.

With this impressive statement, those of us who have known this land will heartily agree.

Chapter Five

ISRAEL'S AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE

Israel's agricultural development is phenomenal. They owe much to men like Dr. Walter Clay Lowdermilk, a leading United States authority on crops and soil conservation. For years he has been advising the Israelis to study what is recorded in their scriptures. "Fortunately," he says, "the Bible tells us what crops will flourish in certain sections. We know the Philistines grew grain, because Samson tied the foxes' tails together, fixed firebrands to them, and turned them loose in the grain fields. They also ran into olive groves. And when Samson visited his sweetheart, he passed through vineyards." Then he adds, "All these crops are doing well there now."

Genesis tells how Isaac sowed grain between Gaza and Beersheba and reaped a hundredfold. "That must have been a good year," a Jewish farmer recently commented dryly. "But," says Dr. Lowdermilk, "we do get better yields here than in other sections."

Archaeologist R. A. MacAlister in 1902-1909 uncovered the ruins of Gezer, the city which Pharoah gave as a dowry to Solomon (I Kings 9:15-16). A stone agriculture calendar, turned up there, gave the various months in which certain crops were harvested. Among those mentioned was flax, which had not been grown in this area for generations. Today it is a favored crop among the prospering cooperative farmers.

In the forbidding Negev, south of Beersheba, no settlement has existed for more than 1300 years. But

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scholars read in Genesis that Abraham took great herds of sheep and oxen to this region. Where had the water for grazing land come from? The area has less than four inches of rainfall a year.

Convinced that the Bible had not deceived them, archaeologists took a close look at the hills. There, in even the smallest gullies, they found the remains of rock dikes, many only two feet high. All were woven into an intricate drainage system which conserved every drop of rain.

Led by tough ex-army scouts who roamed the Negev in wartime, eighteen young men and women set up a tent camp there back in May, 1952. They reproduced the Biblical rain-conservation system to the best of their ability, building forty small dikes on sixty-five acres. Next spring a gratifying lush, green grass flourished for their flock of three hundred sheep.

Reading that Isaac dug cisterns here, the scouts hiked across the desert-like dunes and rocky hills and discovered cisterns hewn out of the limestone. Placed at the bottom of a mound facing a natural runoff, thirty-seven cisterns, each holding twenty thousand gallons now store stock water over a radius of six miles.

Traveling through this area, an Israeli guide told us proudly how General Yigael Yadin, then Chief of Operation, had used the Bible to defend his country. It was in the month of May, 1948, that the Syrians attempted to invade the land of Israel. General Yadin remembered the Biblical account of a similar invasion which had taken place 2800 years earlier when the Syrian Arameans marched from Damascus.

Studying the terrain, the General concluded that the Syrians in 1948 would be forced to take a similar route in their invasion. Deploying his men as the ancient kings of Israel had done so many years before, Yadin prepared to meet the attacking army. The Israeli officers, now familiar with the details of the earlier battle, prepared themselves by donning steel helmets and gripping Tommy guns. They moved forward with confidence. Knowing that their forefathers had routed an earlier enemy at this same spot gave the troops in 1948 a boost in morale. The

result was a victory for Israel.

Yadin again used the Bible for his strategy in December, 1948. At that time the Israelis were being harassed in the Negev. The Bible mentioned an ancient road, forgotten for centuries, which ran almost straight through to Mushrafa. A way was cleared by bulldozers which pushed the heavy boulders aside. Then soldiers in armored vehicles, jeeps and supply trucks made their way, under cover of darkness, along this ancient road. Taking this garrison by surprise, they destroyed their enemies' defense system and 14 days later the 1948 war ended.

The Bible indeed proved most valuable in the building up of the nation of Israel. Ever since the Jews began returning they have been engaged in a tremendous program of reforestation. Many of the great forests have been named in honor of such leaders as Chaim Weismann, Lord Balfour of England, who laid the groundwork for the building of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem as well as King George, England's monarch at the time the forestation program began.

Not only have scores of millions of trees been planted but the Bible has helped in deciding what kinds of trees to plant and where in the country they would best develop. Would some of these barren hillsides be suitable for the immense "Forest of Martyrs"? The answer was found in the book of Joshua. They learned that a forest had existed there in the days when Israel was first conquering the country and knowing that trees grow more easily where trees have flourished before, Professor Zohary of the Hebrew University urged that they try. It proved wonderfully successful. "We here in Israel rely on the Good Book," says the professor.

Dr. Joseph Weitz, Israel's outstanding authority on reforestation remembered that tamarisk was one of the trees Abraham planted in the soil of Beersheba. Following Abraham's lead they put out over two million trees in that same area and discovered that the tamarisk thrives in the south in spite of the scanty rainfall which is only six inches a year. It may surprise our readers to know

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that over seventy million trees have been planted in the land of Israel during the past forty-five years. They read with interest such Scriptures as Ezekiel 35:35,

And they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden.

While some might question whether Ezekiel's prophecy has any relation to Israel today, yet the facts already presented are certainly challenging and worthy of serious study. Nothing moves the hearts of many of the Israelis more than the belief that what is happening in their land is a fulfillment of a divine purpose. Let us cite an example. In 1949 representatives of the Jewish Agency worked out a program with Arabia to free forty thousand Jews but when they got there they found a distinct hesitancy on the part of their fellow countrymen. Remembering their history, the Jews in Arabia knew that a number of false Messiahs had risen among the Yemenites so they feared to follow this program. Then one of the Jewish representatives informed them that the means of transport would be by air. At that, one cried with enthusiasm, "The wings of the eagles!" Feeling this was a sign from God they eagerly entered into the plan. Backward, as far as modern means were concerned, those poor folk would never have trusted themselves to a wagon ride through that country, but they crowded into the DC-4s and rejoiced that on "the wings of eagles," as it were, they were being transported to Israel. Many incidents like that have brought about a change in the thinking of the Jews in many parts of the world. Certain Scriptures are today being read with new enthusiasm.

While as we have said, it is regrettable that many have returned to the land of their fathers in unbelief, yet vast numbers have felt "impelled" to return because of the promises God made through the ancient Hebrew prophets. Scripture promises, doubtless referring to conditions in the coming Kingdom of glory, are being applied to modern Israel, because for so many centuries the Holy Land was little more than a desolate desert,

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whereas today in certain areas it is like a garden of Eden. The words of Isaiah are read with new interest, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir." While the faith of many is dim, yet forced by circumstances they begin to recognize the reliability of God's word.

In 1917 there were less than fifteen thousand trees in all Israel and most of those were terebinth, oak, and thorn. But today the rugged mountains of Israel are mantled with over sixty million trees, mostly conifers. The ultimate aim of the State of Israel is to have 500,000,000 trees!

Another statement in the book of Isaiah says that,

Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowman and your vine-dressers (Isaiah 61:5).

"Strangers" and "Aliens" were to become their plowmen and vinedressers and this, too, is being fulfilled. Already we have noted the work of Dr. W. G. Loudermilk, an outstanding conservationist. He is a Gentile, having grown up in North Carolina, yet this man had taken a leading part in teaching Israeli farmers how to plow on the contour. Another who is not a Jew and therefore an "alien," is Professor Dupain. He has supervised the planting of vineyards and has been responsible for starting another of Israel's great industries.

Ezekiel the prophet recorded the words of God:

I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field (Ezek. 36:30).

A few figures will suffice to illustrate what many regard as a fulfillment of this ancient prophecy. Plantations of fruit trees increased in one five-year period from 88,250 acres in 1949 to 118,750 acres in 1954. Other increases have continued so that fields of vegetables, potatoes, and peanuts multiplied more than four hundred percent from 17,250 acres in 1949 to over 80,000 acres today. Israel now is not only self-supporting in vegetables and fruit but

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exports huge quantities.

It is well known that the Negev is really a home of orange-toned shittim or desert acacia. And the "great Negev pipeline" feeding thousands of sprinklers, faucets, and irrigation pipes is an inspiring sight. This one-time wasteland is now being watered in plenitude from Galilee in the north.

The familiar words in Deuteronomy 32:13 that the Most High found Jacob in a wilderness and brought him to a land where he could "suck . . . oil out of the flinty rock," has real meaning for this generation. In the days of Moses or even in the days of the apostles, oil had little or no value as an industrial commodity. But today industry moves largely on oil. The United States requires three gallons of oil for every man, woman, and child every day for its industrial and household comforts.

When oil was at first discovered in Israel, the announcement was made over the air. Then after a broadcast announcing the new strike these words of Moses were read: "oil out of the flinty rock." While many of the Israelis steeped in the tradition of the Old Testament regard their nation's progress as a fulfillment of these ancient prophecies, yet some fail to see any Scriptural significance in what is happening in their land; they have lost confidence in the Bible. Should we not pray for them?

While the application of some of these Scriptures to what is happening in modern Israel may be questioned by some readers, yet the fact that movements within Israel today are Biblically oriented, at least in the minds of their leaders, is significant and demands our thoughtful consideration. No one can deny that what was once a desert is today a land blossoming as a rose, and areas traversed only by Bedouins with their scattered flocks and herds seeking pasture enough to keep them alive are today waving fields of grain. Do the contrasts in the land of Israel today with the Palestine of yesterday have any meaning for us? We believe the following chapters will give the answer.

Chapter Six

ISRAEL DECLARES HER INDEPENDENCE

Military campaigns involving Israel are not all in the past. The biggest conflict of the ages when all mankind will be involved is nearer than most people imagine. In preceding chapters we have been presenting a happy picture of Israel's restoration as outlined in Bible prophecy. The same prophets who foretold her dispersion also predicted her regathering when she would again become a national force in the land of Israel. This might well be the occasion for that tragic clash which some of the Hebrew prophets described, when a great confederacy of nations would invade this land, threatening to destroy, not only Israel, but all knowledge of Israel's God.

A number of years ago, a keen on-the-spot observer and an influential writer noted the way things were shaping up and recognized it as a fulfillment of some of the great prophecies in the Word of God. He published his convictions in a large volume to which we have already referred. Dealing with Israel's past, present, and future, he made this statement:

Twenty-five centuries ago an obscure captive Jew in the city of Babylon wrote a book in which he pictured in graphic and unmistakable language the very events which are now taking place in Palestine. He told of a time then far off in the dim future, when the land of Palestine, his former

homeland, would be brought to its ancient fertility after a long period of desolation. He told, also, that his people would be "gathered out of many peoples" into their own land, where they would "dwell safely. . .without walls, and having neither bars nor gates" (surely a very singular remark in those days when all cities were built within massive walls for protection against enemies); he told also of a great amalgamation of oriental nations. . .which would set covetous eyes upon Palestine, at the same time, as the Jews were living peaceably once more in Palestine, after being "gathered out of the nations."

How did this obscure Jew, a captive living in exile in Babylon, know all this? Nobody can question the truthfulness and accuracy of his prophetic statements. The history which is now being made every day testifies to the marvelous accuracy of Ezekiel's prophecy. You may search historic records of the past through and through but no fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded there. This prophecy is said specifically to belong to "the latter years"; that is, the time in which we are now living. . .And they were written for "our admonition in whom the ends of the world are come" 1 Corinthians 10:12 (*Through Turmoil to Peace*, A. W. Anderson, pp. 323, 324).

As far back as 1854 A.D., Walter Chamberlain, an able British scholar and theologian, in his book entitled *The National Resources and Conversion of Israel* stated very clearly his convictions. Commenting on Ezekiel's prophecies, he said:

From all which I should infer, the coming restoration of Israel will at first be gradual and pacific; a restoration permitted, if not assisted and encouraged or protected. They will return to occupy the whole land, both cities and villages; they will be settled there, become prosperous and

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increasing in wealth before the great confederacy of northern people will be formed against them.

The prophecy to which he was referring was, of course, Ezekiel 38 which so definitely pinpoints the time when these things would occur. "It shall be in the latter days," the prophet said, verse 16. Before dealing with these prophecies, we do well to emphasize again the soundness of this inspired counsel: "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20). The Revised Version reads "of any self-solving." Any interpretation of the prophetic word must be in harmony with all the other "scriptures of truth." Having already emphasized in an earlier chapter the significance of the expression "the latter days," we recognize that Ezekiel could not possibly be referring to the time in which he was living, for the Scriptures speak of that time as "the former days." Nor could "the latter days" have any reference to events after the millenium, for then time will have no meaning at all; we will be in eternity. The expression "latter days" applies particularly to the time just before the end of the age.

For two hundred years students of prophecy have been anticipating the fulfillment of Ezekiel's predictions, and some were very definite in their interpretations, telling with uncanny accuracy the steps that would lead up to Israel's return and also the coming invasion by a great northern confederacy. Dr. John Thomas, another English scholar, commenting on Ezekiel 38, verses 8-11 said in his book *Elpis Israel*:

I believe there will be a pre-adventual, limited colonization of the country of the Jews. . . and that the prosperity of this colony. . . will be the cause of the country's invasion by "Gog."

The power referred to as "Gog" and introduced in Ezekiel 38:2-3 plays an important role in Satan's warfare against God Almighty. That is why the prophet was told to set his face against "Gog." The reason why the Lord speaks so

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definitely against this power is clearly revealed in verse 7 where He says, "Prepare thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them." Fenton's translation reads, "Be their Commander." The New English Bible speaks of "a great concourse of peoples with you" and the explanatory note says, "'You shall be their chief rallying point,' that is their commander-in-chief, their field marshal."

The question might well be asked, what is the reason for this great confederacy? A number of things could be suggested. The prosperity of this land and its untold mineral and agricultural wealth is already causing jealous eyes to focus on the land of Israel. The author of *Elpis Israel* foretold in a remarkable way certain steps which he believed would lead to Israel's return to their homeland. This student of prophecy also predicted, on the basis of Ezekiel's prophecy, that the financial gains of Israel would be the cause of a great invasion of the land. He even spoke of Israel's return in unbelief. Note these words:

The preadventual colonization of Palestine will be on purely political principles and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief. They will immigrate thither as agriculturists and traders in the hope of ultimately establishing their commonwealth. . .

The definiteness of this theological statement challenges our thought. "The Jewish colonists," he said, "will return in unbelief." Yet, in spite of their unbelief, these scattered people have an innate urge to return to the land of their fathers.

Something had to happen, however, to make their return possible. They could never have immigrated there under the rule of the Sultan. The collapse of the Ottoman

empire at the close of the first World War saw her windling territory divided into the countries we now speak of as Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Israel, etc.

Prior to the First World War, Britain had, on a number of occasions, protected the Ottoman Empire against bitter enemies. But in 1914 when the Turks united with the central powers of Europe against Britain, that changed the whole situation. The Ottoman Empire by that act signed her death warrant.

During that hard-fought war, the then President of the Zionist organization, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, approached Great Britain with a proposition. He was one of the world's great chemists and had discovered a way to make alcohol out of wood and perfect valuable explosives so urgently needed in the manufacture of armaments. Offering Britain exclusive rights to this information, he stated his price — "the creation of a national home for Jews in Palestine." The bargain was "readily made" and Britain, having entered into the compact, began at once to study ways in which it could be made real.

When the war was over the representatives of the nations sat around the table in Versailles to discuss the future of the world, especially the Middle East, and Britain was urged to accept the responsibility of governing the little land of Palestine under the terms of a mandate. After much discussion, Britain reluctantly accepted, knowing much concerning the complex problems of Palestine.

"Under the efficient protection of the British power things began to change rapidly in the Holy Land," says one writer. When the First World War began in 1914, there were fewer than ninety thousand Jews living in all Palestine. That number increased to 300,000 by 1935. When the State of Israel was established in 1948, because of the success of the program of immigration under Britain, the Jews had more than doubled their number to 650,000. Today there are more than two and a half million Israelis in residence there with more than 400,000 Arabs and others, living in comparative harmony. British protection and the encouragement of a strong immigra-

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tion program greatly enhanced Jewish prestige. But this also greatly distresses the neighboring nations.

A hundred years before modern Israel declared her independence Dr. Thomas, from whom we have already quoted, foresaw what would happen in the Holy Land and outlined it clearly. More than a century ago he said

Some other power, friendly to Israel must then have become paramount over the land which is able to guarantee protection to them, and to put the surrounding tribes in fear. . .

But to what part of the world shall we look for a power whose interests will make it willing, as it is able, to plant the ensign of civilization upon the mountains of Israel? . .

I know not whether the men who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain, entertain the idea of promoting its colonization by Jews; their present intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other; because they will be compelled by events soon to happen, to do what, under existing circumstances, heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt

The finger of God has indicated a course to be pursued by Britain which cannot be evaded, and which her counselors will not only be willing, but eager to adopt when the crisis comes upon them (*Elpis Israel*, pp. 441, 442).

This far-seeing student of prophecy did not live to witness the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy, for he passed to his rest in 1871. What would he say were he living today? And what made this scholar so confident? It was his belief that "the Word of God standeth sure." The scripture declares:

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place (II Peter 1:19).

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The proposal that Britain would use her power and prestige to establish a national home for Jews was unthinkable prior to the First World War, but we have lived to see it happen to the amazement of the world. Other students of God's word were emphasizing the importance of the prophecies concerning Israel.

An outstanding American scholar, Increase Mather, who for fifteen years was President of Harvard College (now Harvard University) and incidentally the first Doctor of Divinity in British America, published his book eight years after he returned to Boston from England. This book - *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation* — opened up the crucial prophecies concerning Israel's restoration, pointing out that the Jews would return to Palestine and become a nation, something that might well lead to a spiritual regeneration. He was a minister of the Congregational Church and was a powerful influence in Colonial America. It will be noticed, his book preceded Thomas's *Elpis Israel* by about eighty years.

Then, another scholar, Dr. John Cumming, contemporary with Dr. Thomas, wrote *The Destiny of Nations*, published in 1864. These men all agreed concerning what they believed was to happen to Israel. Concerning the Jews, he said,

How came it to pass that as a nation they have been dispersed over every land, yet insulted, separated, and alone amid the nations; The predictions of their restoration are in words as definite, only not yet fulfilled. [Remember he was writing in 1864]. As a nation they were cut off and dispersed, and it is as a nation that they shall be gathered and restored.

One closing act, however, in this great dramatic history of this extraordinary people is yet needed to complete the whole. While their restoration seems clearly predicted and demanded, yet who would stretch out his hand to move the scene and call forth the actors? Time, of

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course, has cared for that.

We have referred to just a few of the many interpreters of prophecy who, although they did not live to see the shaping of events were convinced of the future of the Jewish nation.

While it is interesting to note what scholars have said about the Jews decades and even centuries ago, it is also vital to become aware of what is going on now. To do that we now enter one of the most delicate areas in the unfolding scene. Having already referred to Britain's role in the re-establishment of Israel and her influence in the closing years of World War I, we must not overlook the fact that in addition to sponsoring the program of a national home for Jews in Palestine, she also had pledged herself to protect the Arabs. To be able to satisfy both groups called for very careful diplomacy.

For hundreds of years the Arabs had been the defenders of their holy places in Palestine. These they highly venerate. Britain was, of course, well aware of that, and one of the first things General Allenby did, as he and his army entered Jerusalem on December 7, 1917, was to throw a cordon of Indian-Moslem troops around the holy places so sacred to the Mohammedans. Since then everything has been done to guard the religious convictions of the many different religions that are part of the Palestine population. And it must be said to the credit of the Jews that despite the tragedy of wars having been fought in this little land since 1948, those sacred places are still intact, as any visitor to the Holy Land can testify. The Jews have shown and continue to show admirable respect for the sacred places of the Moslems.

When Britain accepted the mandate from the old League of Nations, she did so with real misgivings, knowing how difficult the situation would be. And for the first twenty years, at least, she was able to keep her promise inviolate. But pressures began to build up and it is unfortunate that a program that began so helpfully and did so much to calm the fears of the peoples of the Middle East, sadly deteriorated until at last the situation became impossible. Britain at last withdrew, throwing the

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responsibility upon the United Nations, the old League of Nations having died under political pressures years before. The United Nations had already partitioned Palestine in the hope of stabilizing the situation. But that too proved a great disappointment, in fact a disaster.

Sensing that the Jews were about to declare their independence, the Palestinian Arabs declared their determination to resist. In the *Palestine Post*, February 27, 1948, appeared this forthright statement:

The Arabs of Palestine consider that any attempt by the Jews or any power or group of powers to establish a Jewish state in Arab territory is an act of aggression which will be resisted in self defense by force.

The Arabs of Palestine made a solemn declaration before the United Nations, before God and History, that they will never submit or yield to any power going to Palestine to enforce partition.

A few days later the same journal set forth this opposing view by the Jews:

We fully respect the authority of the U.N., but if it is unable to carry out its own decision and in consequence the Jewish community of Palestine is confronted with the threat of annihilation, the latter will be compelled by considerations of sheer survival, not to speak of the preservation of its rights, to take all necessary measures which the situation will call for. . .

We are still hoping that there may be no need for prolonged and serious conflict in Palestine. We do not wish war with our neighbors, only peace and cooperation. Within the framework of the plan calling for two independent states joined in an economic union, there is a possibility for such peace and cooperation (*Palestine Post*, March 8, 1948).

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While both the Jews and the Arabs were awaiting final word from the Security Council of the United Nations, events in Palestine were moving rapidly toward a showdown. Violence was constantly erupting, and as William L. Hull says:

A David and Goliath contest was shaping up in which the Jews were outnumbered very many times and David was shrunken up to less than knee-high on Goliath (*The Fall and Rise of Israel*, p. 307).

But uneven as the contest was, the Jews were rapidly moving into the country's strongholds. Very soon the city of Tiberius became a scene of fighting. But the Israelis captured the whole city and then moved on to establish themselves in eastern Galilee. First the Beisan Valley, then the valley of Jezreel became the possession of Israel. Constant fighting had been going on for months in and around the city of Haifa. There the population was about evenly divided and it still is. At the heat of the fighting Britain made plans to withdraw from the scene.

General Stockwell, the British Commander of that area, advised the Arab and Jewish leaders on the morning of April 21, that he was evacuating the city, except for the port area, and that he would no longer be responsible for the city itself. He scrupulously kept his word. . . . He showed what an honest, fair-minded commander could do if he wished (*Ibid.*, p. 312).

It soon became evident that the Israelis would take over the city. And then transpired one of the most unfortunate things in the whole conflict. Many Arabs fled by boat to Lebanon, and others fled to Acre. They had received instructions from the higher national committee of the Arabs who were themselves fleeing. When these people saw their leaders leaving, they packed up what they could

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in a hurry and made their exit. It may not be generally known, but history records that the Jews urged them to stay, even sending out trucks with loudspeakers telling the Arabs they would not be harmed but would be well looked after. But regretfully all this was to no avail. William Hull, an eye-witness at the time, remarked how amazing it was that so many succeeded in getting away so quickly.

Later when the Jews attacked and captured Acre, those of Haifa who had sought refuge there again became fugitives, joined now by the citizens of Acre. None were more surprised than the Jews, themselves, at their success in capturing all of Haifa in about thirty hours of fighting (Ibid., p. 312).

More than one reporter has commented on the flight. In the words of one, it was "somewhat mysterious, even miraculous." About 800,000 from both northern and southern Palestine later found themselves in the refugee camps. The Israelis maintain that had those Arabs remained where they were, they would have fared the same as the now 450,000 of their fellow countrymen who have been protected under the Israeli government.

On April 12, 1948, the Provisional Council, which later became the government of the Jewish State, announced to the world the Jewish intention to declare their independence. The conclusion of the resolution of the Provincial Council left no room for misunderstanding. It read:

We have resolved this day that the termination of the Mandate for Palestine shall in fact mark the end of all foreign domination in this country. With the termination of this mandatory rule, the government of the Jewish state shall come into being.

In this hour we turn to the Arab citizens of the Arab state and our Arab neighbors. We offer

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peace and friendship. We desire to build our state in common with the Arabs as equal citizens. Our freedom and theirs, their future and ours, rest on common endeavor. Secure in the justice of our cause we are ready to give our all to its achievement, and we call upon the Jews in all lands, and especially in Palestine, to close their ranks for the carrying out of this sublime task.

Fortified by faith we appeal to all nations to grant us this right to our own salvation, and rest our trust in God the Lord of Israel (*The Palestine Post*, April 13, 1948).

As all the world knows, the Mandate ended one minute after midnight on the 14th of May, 1948. That same day, Friday, at 4:00 p.m. a short, stocky man with strong, resolute face and a halo of white bushy hair stood to his feet in the Tel Aviv Museum and after the singing of the Jewish National Anthem began a speech which climaxed the rapid events of the last few days. David Ben-Gurion's speech and the actions of that day have been called "the most important event in the life of all the people of Israel since 33 A.D." The reader will find the full text of the Declaration, which will be read with much interest, in the appendix.

After declaring that the Jewish nation was extending the hand of peace to all the neighbors for the common good of all, he said:

With trust in Almighty God, we set our hand to this declaration, at this session of the Provisional State Council, on the soil of the homeland, in the city of Tel Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the 5th of Iyar, 5708, the 14th day of May, 1948.

Thirty-seven signatures appear at the end of this declaration. It was indeed an historic moment — in some ways the most unique in Jewish history. Never since the day God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees and

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promised that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed has there been a more significant political event in that little land.

The editorial in the *Palestine Post*, March 8, of that year reads:

None will regret more than the Jews the manner of Britain's departure from this country. The high hopes entertained by the world, and not least by such far-sighted Arab statesmen as the late King Faisal, and such understanding friends of the Arabs as Lawrence, have degenerated into disappointment, bitterness and rancor.

The blood sacrificed thirty years ago in the glorious adventure of freeing the Holy Land from the grip of reaction has become changed and muddied in the sordidness of the present struggle, which need never have arisen had the ideals of the earlier generation not been abandoned.

Nevertheless, when today's anguish and anger are forgotten, Britain's first service for Palestine and through Palestine for the world, will be remembered. And in Jewish history, which is long and jealously preserved, the names of Balfour and Lloyd George will be repeated and blessed with the name of Cyrus of old and in them the Britain that they stood for will also be blessed.

These words by William L. Hull who lived through those turbulent months are significant:

Thus the new state began on Saturday, the Sabbath. It seemed symbolic of the hope in every Jewish heart that a Sabbath rest might now come through this new state to this people whose life had been one of wandering, struggling and suffering. Their week of laboring had been so long — had they really entered into their rest? (*Fall and Rise of Israel*, p. 324).

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Crowds of Jews in all the large cities of the world entered into a period of rejoicing. The Palace Theater in London was packed to the last seat in the highest gallery by the leaders of British Jewry.

There was a large crowd of Jewish leaders and invited guests on the platform, but one chair in the front row remained empty. It was to have been occupied by Mrs. Blanche Dugdale, a Christian and a niece of Lord Balfour. She was one of Zion's most stalwart advocates and defenders. The Jews did not have a truer friend. Following her distinguished uncle, she had labored unceasingly and probably, among the British unpopularity, for the Jewish state. But her chair was empty; she had died the day before (Ibid, p. 325).

The Jewish state having been duly established, a program of immigration was now entered into with a new enthusiasm. In Ezekiel 38, the chapter we are considering, we read of, "A land of unwalled villages," and a people, "that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates." Verse 12 declares they are a,

People that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

The New English Bible reads,

A people acquiring cattle and goods, and making their home at the very center of the world.

Speaking of Jerusalem, the Lord says,

This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations (Ezekiel 5:5).

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Jehan de Mandeville (Sir John Mandeville), in his famous book *Travels*, written six hundred years ago says:

The Holy Land, which men call the land of promise or behest, passing all other lands, is the most worthy land, most excellent. . .the sovereign of all other lands. . .the heart and middle of the world.

This narrow strip of land binds together three mighty continents -- Asia, Europe, Africa. It marks the pathway of great trade routes from the earliest records of the human race, and it is the meeting place of three great religions. Ezekiel 38:8 speaks about, "The land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have always been waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them." And this will be "in the latter years" or "the latter days" (Verses 8 and 16).

There surely could be no question concerning what land the prophet Ezekiel was writing about. Not only was he specific concerning the place but also concerning the time. As already mentioned this 38th chapter of Ezekiel has been and is today applied by many scholars, Jew and Christian alike, to the events just prior to the end of the age. All the world knows that no sooner had Israel declared her independence than Israel's neighbors waged war. Although in 1948 there was not one refugee, yet the land was invaded by six of Israel's neighbors. Refugees are not the real cause of the Arab-Israel wars. It seems clear that some nations are determined to get rid of Israel.

In Chapter 18, "Israel and Armageddon," we open up certain areas of study, presenting some startling revelations concerning not only the immediate future of Israel, but of the world. Israel's demand for independence might well be one of a chain of events that could bring the climax of earth's history.

The centrality of Israel in the international crisis of our time is evident to all. While it cannot be stated with

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certainty, yet all well-informed observers realize the tremendous possibility of an all-out attack by a giant confederacy, inspired and guided by the Satanic forces of atheism. And this will be just before the end of time. Everything points up the fact that this is very near.

War is always tragic, but the cause of war is often overlooked. The Scriptures state clearly that the basic cause is sin. "From whence came wars and fightings among you," says James. "Come they not hence, even of your own lusts, that war in your members? Ye lust and have not; ye kill and desire to have and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not. . . ." (James 4:1, 2). Man, by nature, is selfish and self-centered. The determination to gratify selfish aims leads individuals as well as nations into war. To have a warless world we must first have a sinless world. And thank God a day is coming when sin will be no more. But in the meantime we live in a world of violence, lust, and greed. Political assassinations and rebellions seem the order of the day. Fearing military attack, Israel is endeavoring to prepare.

How well she is prepared was demonstrated by that brilliant rescue when more than one hundred hostages were snatched from the jaws of death and brought home to Israel from Africa. The world will not soon forget that great humanitarian rescue from Entebbe.

A recent A.P. release from Tel Aviv says that "Israel has become a major exporter of arms, ranking itself with Switzerland, Italy and Sweden in the sale of weapons to foreign governments. . . .

"The arms industry is one of Israel's largest employers, with tens of thousands of workers manufacturing everything from small ammunition to jet fighters. The locally made Uzi submachine gun, for example, is sold to more than 60 countries."

The news release described some items such as the "Gabriel Millile" — a "300-pound warhead" with "a range of 20 miles," and "the Shafrir air-to-air missile system" which it is claimed, "can be used against aircraft at altitudes of up to 60,000 feet."

Israel's greatest problem at present is not one of trade

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or commerce, but of survival. Some time ago Israel's Prime Minister was reported as saying, "Our struggle is not of over what land we shall live on; rather it is *whether we shall live at all.*" Since October 1973, Israel has revamped its military force and is spending 35 percent of its national income on defense, compared to say 8 percent in the U.S. In addition military duty has been increased to 3 years from 2½ years for men and 2 years from 20 months for women. Almost all able-bodied men must spend some five weeks each year in the reserves. "The Yom Kippur war was and still remains a shock for us. The number of casualties [2569 killed, 7500 wounded] and the tremendous expense of the war [\$9 billion, or roughly a year's national output]. . . we are going to continue to feel. . . for several years to come" (George Michaelson, *Parade Magazine*, Oct., 1976).

When Israel declared her independence, it was with assurances and high hopes for peace with her neighbors. But recent history has shown how futile human plans are. The big question is: Where will all this end?

Chapter Eighteen brings us to the climax of human history -- "the battle of the great day of God Almighty," or Armageddon -- when the whole world, led by the Satanic trinity of "the dragon, the beast and the false prophet," challenges Israel's God.

**Chapter Seven
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INDEPENDENCE
PERMANENT?**

No nation in history has revealed a greater genius for adaptability and versatility than the Jews. Although a downtrodden people, despised and rejected, they have adjusted themselves to their varied environments. While buffeted and slandered they have always cherished in their hearts the hope that someday the nation would again go back to their homeland. This hope crystalized in that political program known as the Zionist Movement.

It is said that Dr. Hertzl, founder of the Movement, once visited Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany requesting that he negotiate the purchase of Palestine for the Zionists. They had the money and would pay for it. The Kaiser made a visit to the Holy Land in 1912, but certain things seemed to have changed the Kaiser's ideas. When he returned to Germany, he refused even to give the doctor an interview. The fact was he had entered into an alliance with the head of the crumbling Ottoman Empire. Two years later in 1914, the world was plunged into global war. This brought an end, not only to the Ottoman Empire, but to the German Empire as well. General Allenby of Britain, himself of Jewish background and a military genius, broke Turkish resistance and freed Palestine. For this he was given a peerage — "Earl of Megiddo." Not only was the whole of the Middle East changed but the ambitions of the scattered people of Israel were stirred.

At the time World War I began, Baron Edmond de Rothschild with a number of other wealthy Jews was negotiating for the purchase of 35,000 acres of the richest

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soil in Palestine. World War I brought an end to those negotiations, and when Turkey joined with Germany, that brought the Holy Land into the theater of war. Things have moved fast in that area since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922. Today Israel is a well-established nation in the land of her fathers. While this is viewed with grave concern by their Arab neighbors, it is regarded by many Christians as one of the most definite signs of the imminent coming of the Messiah. In this chapter we compare certain promises God gave to His ancient people.

An important question often raised is, can the re-establishment of this nation today be fitted into the prophecy of Jeremiah 19, which reads:

Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again (Jeremiah 19:11).

Jeremiah proclaimed that word from the Lord in the presence of the leaders of the people of Judah and the ancient priests. For years he had been bearing a message of warning, pleading with the people to obey God, declaring that if they continued in their defiant disobedience God would permit Jerusalem to be destroyed. The Lord sent him down to the potter's house. There he watched the man at work making a vessel of clay. He saw it was "marred in the hand of the potter." Instead of throwing it away, he "made it again" (Jeremiah 18:4). God likened Himself to the potter who was able to do with the clay what he would. So God could take this nation and by His grace make them over again. But the people gave no heed to God's messenger. Their tragic reply was:

We will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.
(Jeremiah 18:12).

Their evil practices were almost beyond description for they had lapsed back into witchcraft and base immorality so prevalent among the nations around them.

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To make his message still more impressive, Jeremiah, under God's command, took the earthen vessel the potter had made and calling the leaders of the nation together he made one last appeal saying:

Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods.

They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal (Jeremiah 19:3-5).

So God said:

I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; everyone that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of the plagues thereof.

Following the instruction of the Lord, the prophet then broke the vessel in the sight of the people saying:

Thus saith the LORD of Hosts; even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again (Jeremiah 19:8, 11).

This was a prophecy concerning the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians. Jeremiah foretold the coming of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and said Judah would be utterly destroyed as a kingdom. But he was even more specific, stating just how long they would remain in captivity.

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the

king of Babylon seventy years (Jeremiah 25:11).

There is no question as to whom this message was directed. It was to the kingdom of Judah, the kingdom of Israel having been taken into captivity by the Assyrians a century and a half earlier. And now Judah having lapsed into the same diabolical sins which they carried on with a high hand, God said,

I will break this people and this city Jerusalem as one breaketh a potter's vessel that cannot be made whole again. . . I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon and he shall carry them captive into Babylon (Jeremiah 19:11; 20:4).

But that was not all God said for we read:

For thus saith the Lord, after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you [*Judah*] and perform my good word toward you in causing you to return to this place [*Jerusalem*].

During those seventy years Judah would be a broken vessel that could not be made whole again. But after seventy years God declared he would bring them back into their homeland. And history proves God did just that. While the people could not put the potter's vessel together again, the God of heaven did. For "with God all things are possible." Now note this promise:

And it shall come to pass when the seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. (Jeremiah 25:11, 12).

God made it even more emphatic, as we already noticed.

After seventy years be accomplished in Babylon

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I will visit you and perform my good word toward you in causing you to return to this place. (Vs. 12.)

Anyone with an open mind can see clearly that God was talking to the kingdom of Judah, which was comprised of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. During the seventy years of their captivity Jerusalem and the land of Judah became a desolation. It was like a potter's broken vessel. And then two years after Babylon's overthrow, Cyrus the Great, the Persian King, passed a decree permitting the Jews to go back and rebuild the temple. He even supplied the money to cover the costs of the rebuilding program. We read that important decree in Ezra 1:1-4.

Because of delays in the project, another royal decree was issued by Darius in 519 B.C. (See Ezra 6:8, 14). The temple was rebuilt and completely finished four years later in 515 B.C. But the city was not rebuilt at that time. It took another royal decree to bring that about. This third and final decree was passed in 457 B.C. by King Artaxerxes. We read that decree in Ezra 7:12-26.

While the Jews were given complete autonomy under the Persian rule, and later also under Greek rulership, yet Judah was never more than a vassal state or protectorate of Persia, then of Greece, then of Rome. In 161 B.C. the Jews entered into an alliance with the growing Roman empire. In so doing they thought they were protecting themselves, but all that happened was they became a part of the Roman empire. While the Jews rebuilt the Temple and the city, the Ark of the Covenant which Jeremiah hid in a cave was never restored. Not since then have they had a king or a throne. They were always under the rulership of other nations until A.D. 1948, when Israel once again became an independent nation. Since then, she has been growing in military and industrial strength.

Not since Zedekiah, the last reigning king of Judah, was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. has Judah been a real kingdom with a king or president! When our common era began, they were still under

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Roman rule. Then in A.D.66 the Jewish-Roman war began. Four years later in A.D.70 Jerusalem was completely overthrown and the nation scattered to the four winds.

For nineteen hundred years the Jewish nation has had no homeland, and the city of Jerusalem has been trodden down by Gentile nations. The first World War brought great changes to this part of the world, for the Ottoman Empire, which for hundreds of years had occupied the land of Palestine, was overthrown. There is no Ottoman Empire today.

The Middle East has seen some drastic changes during the last six decades, but in no area have the changes been more dramatic than in the land of Israel. Not only has Israel become a nation recognized as a member of the World Council of United Nations, but the city of Jerusalem is again the capital of that re-established nation. The same God who foretold the scattering of the Jews also foretold their restoration. Not only have the remnants of the kingdom of Judah been brought together, but also the ancient name of Israel has been restored.

What was impossible of accomplishment through the centuries by wars and intrigues is in these "latter days" an accomplished fact. The coming back of Israel into their homeland is actually one of the greatest signs that we have about reached the end of the age. Even Samaria, the place where the rival kingdom of the north had its headquarters, is now a part of the land of the New Israel.

While the Hebrew people were still in the wilderness, Moses, their great leader, set before them very clearly God's purpose for them as a nation. He told them that if they obeyed God and kept themselves from idols, they would be blessed above all peoples of the earth. But if they disobeyed, he said,

The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before
thine enemies. (Deuteronomy 18:25).

He painted a dark picture of the curses that would follow

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their disobedience. And we all know the tragic story of this nation. It has been written in blood and misery century after century. Moses said:

Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the nations whither the LORD shall lead thee. . . .

And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God. . . .

And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other. . . .

And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and sorrow of mind:

And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherein thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see (Deuteronomy 28:37, 62-67).

Could the language be more clear than this? It was not that God wanted to see His people scattered by their enemies, for it was God Himself who placed them in the land of promise. But *their national sojourn there was dependent upon their loyalty to Him* and their obedience to His commandments. Unfortunately they drifted into the practices of their heathen neighbors until the Scripture says "there was no remedy" (II Chronicles 36:14-16). God had to permit their enemies to come and remove them. They were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. But in the purpose of God, they went back and for about five hundred years the Jews remained in the

land of promise.

They had learned their lesson well; in fact they became fanatical followers of the law to the letter. But in their zeal they missed the whole purpose of God for them. Had they followed the counsels of their greatest Teacher and prayed for their enemies, had they begun to do good to those that spitefully used them and persecuted them, how different the story would have been! Instead of loving their enemies, they hated them; instead of revealing the principles of kindness and grace, they resisted the Romans. They were more concerned with politics than true religion.

In A.D. 66, a revolutionary movement began among a group that called themselves Zealots. They made a determined effort to drive out the Romans. It was these Zealots who actually began the war between the Jews and the Romans. With what result? They themselves were driven out, the nation was completely overthrown, the Temple was destroyed, and hundreds of thousands were sold into slavery. The words of Moses were truly fulfilled:

Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb,
and a byword (Deuteronomy 28:37).

Lord Byron, one of England's greatest poets, pictured the tragedy of this downtrodden people in these lines quoted earlier:

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall we flee away and at rest?
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country — Israel but the grave.

Moses said, "Ye shall be left few in number" (Deuteronomy 28:62), and history confirms it. The Jewish people, one of the oldest nations in the world, should today number into the hundreds of millions, but instead they are, by comparison, few in number. There were nearly twenty million Jews in the world before the Hitler onslaught. Now, through increased birthrate, they

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number about sixteen million. They are to be found nearly every land. Through these tragic centuries, the Jews have, for the most part, lived in fear. Their homes were ghettos.

When God called Abraham, He promised him that he would become a great nation and through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. It was God's purpose that Abraham's posterity would carry the gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth. They were to be "light to the Gentiles."

When King David began to rule Israel, the Lord made the promise much more specific. It was through him and his posterity that the nation rose to real greatness. When David died, Solomon came to the throne, and he was not only the wealthiest king, but he became, for his time, the wisest king who ever lived. The Lord imbued him with marvelous gifts, but he tragically forgot his Maker and deliberately got mixed up with the pagan practices of the nations around him.

His greatest mistake was his infatuation with women. His harem consisted of some 300 wives and 700 concubines, most of whom were pagans. After his death this strong, virile nation broke up into two nations with rival kings, each jealous of the other. Their spiritual lapses called forth the stern rebuke of God. Instead of being the great nation God intended them to be, these kingdoms known as Israel and Judah, were invaded and most of the people were either killed in battle or taken and sold as slaves. Willful idolatry and all the evil associated with it at last brought the judgments of God upon them. Jeremiah the prophet of God declared:

And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;

But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:

THEREFORE THUS SAITH THE LORD of

hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

I will scatter them also among the heathen [*nations*], whom neither they nor their forefathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them. (Jeremiah 9:13-16).

And the Lord said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.

Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.

Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense; but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble. For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense to Baal. (Jeremiah 11:9-13)

A hundred years earlier, God, through Isaiah, said:

"O that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments; then had thy peace been as a river and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." (Isaiah 48:18)

The prophet Jeremiah foresaw the awful fulfillment of God's word. Yet despite their spiritual lapses, the promise of God was equally clear. As we have already noted, just seventy years after the first captive arrived in Babylon a royal decree by the Persian King Cyrus permitted the captives to return in fulfillment of Isaiah's and Jeremiah's prophecies.

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Wonderful spiritual leaders arose to play a role in the re-establishment of the people of Judah in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. But those who returned were but a small remnant of the nation. Moreover, they were not from the twelve tribes, for we read: "The children of the province that went up out of the captivity," were those "whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away into Babylon" (Ezra 2:1). But though small in number, it was at least a partial fulfillment of God's purpose.

Moses foretold a larger scattering and a much larger regathering. He said,

The LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other (Deuteronomy 28:64).

For all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly. . .

But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors (Leviticus 26:44, 45).

The covenant God made with their ancestors — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and later repeated to David and Solomon — He determined to keep. A covenant is an agreement between two parties. The big question was: would Israel keep her side of the covenant? Sad to say, she did not.

Hundreds of years before Jeremiah's day, Moses, who led the nation from Egyptian slavery, gave this solemn warning to the nation:

Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you (Deuteronomy 4:23).

History reveals they forgot God's covenant. Consequently, they were scattered among all the nations. But having stated that, Moses continued with this promise:

If from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy

God, thou shalt find him if thou seek him with all thine heart and with all thy soul (Deuteronomy 4:29).

This great leader also stated:

When thou art in tribulation, and all things come upon thee, **even in the latter days**, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice. . .

He will not forsake, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them (Deuteronomy 4:30-31).

Moses wrote those prophetic words before the nation had even entered the land of Canaan. How specific he was! But note this wonderful promise: "He will not forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore to keep." God's promises are more certain than the sunrise. This one surely applies in the days in which we live -- "the latter days." That expression "in the latter days" is deeply significant. It could not possibly refer to the days of David, Daniel, Ezra, or any time prior to the common era, for the centuries before were called "the former days." But Moses, like many of the other great prophets, looked down to the time in which we live and spoke concerning events to happen in "the latter days." And as we have emphasized, one such event would be the regathering and re-establishment of the nation of Israel in the land of their fathers. Looking back forty years to the days of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, Moses recognized that their deliverance was the greatest event since creation up to that time. Appealing to the nation to be faithful he said:

For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?

Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?

Or has God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him (Deuteronomy 4:32-35).

But this great prophet looked also into the future. He saw that the people, once so miraculously delivered, would turn from God and because of their disobedience would ultimately be scattered among the nations. He said that they would suffer great tribulation. But he also foresaw many turning to God again not only in the days of Cyrus, but also in the "latter days." So he emphasized that the Lord would be merciful to them and would remember the covenant He had made with their fathers.

In the land of Israel today we find Jews gathered from practically every nation of earth. While they have been greatly influenced by the environment and the culture in which they have been reared, yet they rejoice because they are back in what they call their "homeland," for no matter where they have been reared this little land has always been considered "home." While there are more Jews in the city of New York than any other area of like size in the world and these are, of course, American citizens, they, like the rest of the Jews around the world, look to Israel, sentimentally at least, as their homeland. It is sad in some countries when people who want to emigrate to the Holy Land are prevented from leaving the country of their birth. But in spite of all the obstacles, this scattered nation is coming together again. The question arises again, does this have any Scriptural significance? In Jeremiah 31:10 we read:

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Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, **He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd does his flock.**

Even though they be "afar off," "in the isles" they would be gathered. Then in verse 7, we read:

Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth.

From these Scriptures, it seems clear that there will be, in the providence of God, a gathering together of this people from every part of the world. While this well-known promise in the Book of Jeremiah has a definite spiritual application, we must not overlook that it refers primarily to the regathering of the once-scattered nation:

Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, the LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

But, the LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers (Jeremiah 16:14-16).

The kingdom of Judah, as we have noted, was overthrown by the Babylonians and a small section of them returned under the decree of Persia seventy years later, but this prophecy and many other Scriptures speak of a gathering from *every nation* under heaven, not merely from Babylon. In verse 13, the prophet is quoting

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the words of the Lord:

Therefore will I cast ye out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not show you favor.

How true that was. Driven from their homeland into the four corners of the earth by the Romans, this nation became the butt and ridicule of all people. That condition, however, was not going to last forever. The same Lord that permitted them to be scattered declared He would gather them again.

While the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt was, up to that time, the greatest event in human history since creation, yet the regathering of the scattered Jewish people in our day seems equally great and is claiming the attention of the whole world. When this scattered, persecuted people find their way back to the land of their fathers and establish themselves as a nation that too, is miraculous. Many students of God's word declare that the ancient prophets foretold this event; consequently, we are compelled to examine these Scriptures, praying constantly for the ability to "rightly divide the Word of truth." In Jeremiah 30, verse 3, we read:

For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

Both Israel and Judah are mentioned in the Scripture. It was only Judah and a handful of Levites that returned from Babylon (Ezra 2:1). Now put with that Scripture, these words from the prophet Amos:

And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards,

and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them.

And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God (Amos 9:14-15).

The Scripture here says, "They shall no more be pulled up out of their land." Could it be that God is stating unequivocally that these people will remain there until the end of time? If so, then it is surely something worth noting, for in recent years we have heard ambitious dictators declaring that, "Israel must be driven into the sea." Similar expressions have been made over and over again through the centuries. Even when there were just a handful of Jews left in the land, some nations were determined on their extinction. But they are there today, more strongly entrenched and better organized than at any time since the days of King Solomon. Michael Beers, outstanding Jewish writer, in his *Appeal to the Justice of The Kings* expresses the history of his people in these words, which we quoted in part, in our opening chapter.

Braving all kinds of torment — pangs of death, and still more terrible, pangs of life — we have withstood the impetuous storm of time, sweeping indiscriminately in its course nations, religions, and countries. What has become of those celebrated empires, whose very name still excites our admiration by the idea of splendid greatness attached to them, and whose power embraces the whole surface of the known globe? They are only remembered as monuments of the vanity of human greatness. Rome and Babylon are no more; their descendants, mixed with other nations, have lost even the traces of their origin; while a population of a few millions of men, so often subjugated, stands the test of revolving ages, and the fiery ordeal of eighteen centuries of persecution. We still preserve laws that were given

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to us in the first days of the world, in the infancy of nature. The last followers of religion which has embraced the universe have disappeared these eighteen centuries and our temples are still standing.

We alone have been spared by the indiscriminating hand of time, like a column left standing amid the wrecks of worlds and the ruins of nature. The history of our people connects present times with the first ages of the world, by the testimony it bears to the existence of those early periods. It begins at the cradle of mankind: It is likely to be preserved to the very day of universal destruction.

Yes, it seems this nation will continue as long as time shall last. This prophecy uttered by Israel's greatest Teacher is deeply significant. He said:

This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled (Matthew 24:34).

The word "generation" comes from the Greek word *genera* and is usually thought of as a period of time. But the word "generation" also can mean a descent or a single succession of men from father to son, a race of men, as John Parkhurst emphasizes in his *Lexicon*. Martin Luther's German translation reads,

"This race shall not pass, etc."

Dr. Adam Clark, foremost Methodist commentator, in his comment on Matthew 24:34 makes a very interesting point. In his *Bible Commentary*, he said:

The Jews shall not cease from being a distinct people till all the counsels of God relative to them and the Gentiles be fulfilled. Some translate this generation meaning the persons who were then living that they should not die before these signs, etc. took place: but though this was true, as to the

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calamities that fell upon the Jews, and the destruction of their government, temple, etc., yet as our Lord mentions Jerusalem's continuing to be under the power of the Gentiles till the fulness of the Gentiles should come in. . . , I think it more proper not to restrain its meaning to the few years which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem; but to understand it of the care taken by divine providence to preserve them as a distinct people, and yet to keep them out of their own land, and from their temple service.

According to the predictions of the ancient Hebrew prophets, these people were destined to be preserved and at the end of the age gathered again to the land of their fathers. For Jews who truly love God's Word this could be a special opportunity, a divine call, to study more deeply the wonderful promises concerning the long looked for Messiah.

This challenging statement concerning the coming of our Messiah - King by the author of the book *Desire of Ages* is also deeply significant. Speaking of the Mount of Olives, we read:

Upon its summit His feet will rest when He shall come again. Not as a man of sorrows, but as a glorious and triumphant king He will stand upon Olivet, while Hebrew hallelujahs mingle with Gentile hosannas, and the voices of the redeemed as a mighty host shall swell the acclamation, Crown Him Lord of all! (*Desire of Ages*, p. 830).

Some will probably claim that the writer must have been referring to events at the end of the millennium. But after reigning with our saviour for a thousand years, it would be difficult to imagine a division between Hebrews and

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Gentiles. All will be one nation then — “the nation of the redeemed.”

Psalms 50:3-6 is a majestic hymn:

Our God shall come and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him and shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is Judge himself.

It is then that the Messiah appears as “a glorious triumphant King,” crowned with many crowns and accompanied by all the holy angels. It is in this setting that, “Hebrew hallelujahs mingle with Gentile hosannas,” as the voices of the redeemed shall swell the acclamation, “Crown him Lord of all!”

This picture of the King of glory sweeping down the vaulted skies, leading the armies of heaven in a giant rescue mission defies description. It was this that the author undoubtedly had in mind when the above words were written, because Acts 1:9 is part of the picture which speaks of the disciples gazing upward when their muse was interrupted by two angels which said, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand gazing up into heaven?” Then they gave the fascinating promise: He will “come in like manner as you have seen Him go.” When He went “a cloud received Him out of their sight,” verses 11 and 9. He Himself said He would return in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30). The Patmos prophet exclaimed in rapture, “Behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him!” (Revelation 1:7) Nothing can compare with that revelation of glory, when His waiting saints of every race, color, and language are delivered from their enemies and even the power of death has been conquered. No wonder they join in hallelujahs and hosannas.

Then at the end of the thousand years, when these redeemed ones, with the saints of all the ages return with Messiah the King, they will be accompanied by the Holy City — the New Jerusalem which the prophet saw “coming down from God out of heaven” (Revelation 21:2). That is not the way He went. He did not ascend in the Holy City although He was enshrouded in a cloud of glory. But when he comes as Messiah the King it will be in clouds of glory and with “the chariots of God even thousands of angels” as on Sinai (Psalm 68:17). The prophet Isaiah says:

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord will wipe away tears from off all faces. . . . And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him and he will save us: this is the Lord, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation!” (Isaiah 25:8-9). What a day of rejoicing that will be!

Chapter Eight

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

One of the most unusual prophecies concerning Israel is that of Ezekiel 37 — the valley of dry bones. Ezekiel, a young priest, had been captured by the Babylonian army. As a war prisoner on his way from his homeland to Babylon, he evidently passed over an old battlefield covered with the grim reminders of war — human bones scattered everywhere.

Arriving at his destination he met many other prisoners. They too were discouraged, as prisoners of war usually are. In Babylon he wondered what could be done to inspire these pathetic people with hope. Pondering the problem, he sought the Lord who brought to his mind a vivid recollection of what he had witnessed in that valley of dry bones. God used this as the setting for His message to reach not only the prophet's own heart but the hearts also of the other captives. Note his words:

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. . .

Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

We are not left to guess the meaning of this vision. It represents "the whole house of Israel," verse 11. In verses

2-5 we continue the prophet's story. He tells how the Lord:

Caused me to pass by them round about: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry.

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause the breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.

This valley, covered with dry bones, was a symbol of Israel in their dispersion. It was a sad, almost hopeless picture. But the Lord went on to say:

I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

While this prophecy given to Ezekiel approximately 2500 years ago had a vital meaning for God's people in that day, it has an even greater meaning for us today. Israel, without a homeland for nearly two thousand years, has been dead. The dry bones in the valley were a perfect picture of this scattered, homeless multitude. Yet God said, "Ye shall live," again. But how? Human ingenuity could never accomplish this but God could. In verses 7 to 12 the Lord was giving instruction to His prophet. Ezekiel continues as he says,

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

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And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered the above: but there was no breath in them.

Not only did the bones come together but sinews and flesh came up upon them. But they were still only corpses. There was no life in them. So the prophet continues,

Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath *came into them, and they lived, and stood* upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

In spite of the fact that Israel was cut off and scattered, that very diaspora made possible their future restoration as a sign of God's power. The prophet was further told:

I will open your graves. . .and bring you into the land of Israel (Ezekiel 37:12).

That was partially fulfilled in the return from Babylon. But think what is happening today.

And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves.

I shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it and performed it, saith the LORD (verses 13 and 14).

Some Bible students relate these verses to the resurrection of the believers at the Messiah's coming. But verse 11 says:

These bones are the whole house of Israel: behold,

they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off from our parts

Bible believers have never said, "Our bones are dried and we are cut off." Even when a believer dies he knows he is not cut off; he still belongs to the Lord. His body is at rest but only until the resurrection at the end of the age. But the dramatic experience of the nation Israel is altogether different. Through these long centuries, Israel has felt "cut off." Yet, in spite of terrible persecution, they have always looked to the land of their fathers just as an Englishman looks to England or a German looks to Germany or an American looks to America.

In many Scriptures this same thought is expressed: "I shall place you in your own land" (verse 14), which to the Jew is the land that God gave to Abraham, the land which He promised to Isaac and Jacob — the land of Israel.

When the way opened for these scattered people to return, many realized that God had not forgotten His promise. And for those with confidence in the Bible, the parable in Ezekiel is full of meaning. To the prophet came the command:

Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

Before these scattered bones, symbols of a dispersed nation, could be brought into their own land, there had to be "a shaking" in order to bring the bones together. For almost eighteen centuries nothing had been done for Israel. They were a scattered people and few seemed to care. But about a century ago things began to happen that aroused the nation to action. A shaking began which has never stopped. The result of this arousal was the birth of the Zionist movement. No one, of course, would claim that the Zionist organization was a spiritual movement. Mr. Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to

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Turkey at the time the first World War broke out, spoke very frankly about this movement. Being a Jew himself, he felt quite free to speak on the subject. In his autobiography, *All In A Lifetime*, he stated the situation as he saw it. He said,

Zionism is the most stupendous fallacy in Jewish history. I assert that it is wrong in principle and impossible of realization; that it is unsound in its economics, fantastical in its politics and sterile in its spiritual ideals. Where it is not pathetically visionary, it is cruel playing with the hopes of the people blindly seeking their way out of age-long miseries (quoted in *Through Turmoil to Peace*, p. 308).

Some, of course, would doubtless take issue with this evaluation. But no one would dispute that Zionism was more political than spiritual. Its distinct objective was to get the people back into the Holy Land. We might well ask the question, "Was God moving upon these men?" He has done so in the past as in the days of Persia and many times since. But the restoration of Israel after nearly two thousand years of separation and desolation needed more than just an organization. This Ezekiel clearly saw as in vision he watched the sinews and the flesh coming upon the bones. Then skin covered them above.

What were only dry and scattered bones began to take bodily shape; they were becoming more attractive. But there was no breath in them, no spark of life. While the objectives of Zionism were clear, yet the leaders of the movement recognized that they had no government and no voice as a nation. It was just an organization and nothing more.

But let us follow the parable. The prophet was then told to:

Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man,
and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD;

Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe
upon these slain, that they may live.

In Bible prophecy "wind" represents war, strife, or commotion. What are we to understand by the "four winds"? Could they represent world-wide war? We have already referred to Dr. Hertzl's approach to Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany offering to buy the land of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire. The Jews in America and Europe were financially able to do it. The Kaiser promised to do his best to bring about such a deal.

Not long after that interview the Kaiser made a personal visit to the Holy Land. That was in 1912. He purposed to bargain with the Ottoman Empire on behalf of the Jews. When he returned to Germany he refused even to give Dr. Hertz an interview. The reason was obvious. He had entered into a different kind of contract with the Ottoman Empire. He pledged that Germany would build a railroad extending all the way from Berlin to what is now Iraq. It was to be known as "The B.B.B. Railway" — "*The Berlin, Byzantium, Bagdad Railway.*"

That project, however, never came to full fruition because in less than two years almost the whole world was in the grip of the great war — World War I. Before that terrible war ended, the Kaiser himself had abdicated, having fled to Holland where he remained a self-styled prisoner for the remainder of his life.

World War I ended in 1918. A year earlier the Sultan fled Constantinople or Istanbul, as we call it today, taking refuge on a British gunboat. He made his way to Alexandria in Egypt leaving German officers in command of the Ottoman troops throughout Palestine. The British Army was led by General Allenby, one of the greatest generals in the first World War. He was advancing from Egypt through the Gaza strip into the Holy Land. Commenting on this, W. K. Ising, a resident minister in that area for many years says,

One feature attending military operations
against the Turkish army in Palestine was the

mystic interpretation given to the name of the general in command of the British forces, who was hailed by the population in Jerusalem and in the country outside as the God-sent liberator, as there seemed no mistaking the providential suggestion in his name, Allenby. Read in Arabic characters — with which ordinarily vowels do not appear unless standing at the beginning or at the end of a word — the name had a significant meaning to these people.

Read from left to right in Western style, it is Allah Nabi, the prophet of God; and read from right to left in Arabic style it is Ibn Allah, the Son of God. This certainly is a most curious coincidence which was bound to appeal to the mystic mind of the Oriental, a fact commented upon in the Arabic papers (*Among the Arabs in Bible Lands*, p. 42).

Another careful observer and historian has well said:

The natural superstitions of the Moslem people concerning names and their significance played a part in the downfall of Jerusalem.

When the Turkish soldiers learned that an army was approaching Jerusalem under the leadership of a general whose name was Allenby, their courage failed them for that name, spelled in Turkish, means "The Scourge of God" (*Through Turmoil to Peace*, p. 277, A. W. Anderson).

Add to this a legend attached to a large terebinth tree, once used by the Turks as a gallows. It had over the years been decaying. It was no longer possible to use this tree for such a grim project. But there was a saying in Jerusalem that when this tree collapsed it would mark the fall of the Turkish Empire. So great pains were taken to keep the tree propped up. A strong pole had been placed beneath the heavy branch on the side that was threatening to break down. But the tree had actually begun to split, so

an iron band was fastened around the trunk. A heavy storm, however, caused this old tree to break, bringing great consternation to those people who believed in fate.

As if all these things were not enough, there was also an old legend in Palestine relating to the waters of the Nile which claimed that when the waters of the Nile flow into the city of Jerusalem it would fall. Of course, they never envisioned Nile waters flowing into Jerusalem. This was virtually to say Jerusalem would never fall, for the city is 2593 feet above sea level. These sayings gave a boost to the idea that Jerusalem would always be in the hands of the Ottoman Empire.

But General Allenby, on his way north from Egypt, and needing water for his advancing army, was already pumping water from the Nile across the desert. As he moved up toward Jerusalem those pumps were bringing the water up more than 2500 feet to the old city. Learning of that, the superstitious Ottoman army lost courage. Now put these ideas together, then let the mind imagine the effect it would have upon fatalistic people.

Five years before Allenby's victorious entry into Jerusalem, Kaiser Wilhelm made his visit there. At that time a special opening was made in the city wall through which the German Emperor entered accompanied by the naval choir singing "Behold Thy King Cometh Unto Thee."

When Allenby entered Jerusalem, however, it was different. He dismounted from his horse, bowed his head, and walked into the city through the Jaffa Gate, known to the natives as "Nab-el Khalil" or "The Friend." There was no display of arms, no pomp, no thunderous salute, nor was there any resistance because the officers of the German army had all fled north the night before. Only a few stragglers remained. Allenby entered without firing a shot. He was hailed by the populace as the "Great Deliverer," and the first thing he did was to proclaim peace to the city in nine different languages. That was December 11, 1917.

His problems were not all over, however, for he was destined to meet the Ottoman armies up in the north

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where he led a brilliant campaign on the actual field of Megiddo, which completely routed what was left of the Ottoman army. It was after that battle that the British knighted him as the "Earl of Megiddo." That last battle was fought and won on October 31, 1918, just exactly eleven months after the fall of Jerusalem. Eleven days later the Great War came to an end with the signing of the Armistice, which was signed at the eleventh hour of the eleventh month just eleven days after the victorious battle of Megiddo, exactly eleven months after Allenby's entrance in to Jerusalem! Could it be that the God of heaven was telling the world that we had reached the eleventh hour of history; that the midnight hour was at hand?

From that time on events began to transpire rapidly, not only in the land of Israel but throughout all the Middle East. A short time earlier, the Balfour Declaration had been submitted to the League of Nations which permitted the Jews to go back to their homeland and re-establish their nation in the land of their fathers. That declaration was quickly ratified. But at that time the Jews had no power, no voice, and no government. They were actually in the hands of the British government which held a mandate over Palestine from the old League of Nations.

This, however, was only the beginning, but it was a beginning, and the Jews were permitted to go back to their homeland. And back they went by the thousands, by the tens of thousands. In other words, the nation began to come to life. Now let us ponder the parable of the bones in Ezekiel 37. The prophet says,

They. . . stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army.

Did this actually happen? If so, when? Following World War I, even while Britain governed the land under a mandate, there was a great deal of conflict between the different peoples of Palestine. So after twenty-seven years of difficult administration, Britain in 1948 threw up her

hands and relieved herself of the responsibility. The mandate was gladly given back to the United Nations. That was May 14, 1948, a date we have already referred to. The next day Israel proclaimed herself an independent nation. President Truman quickly recognized the new state of Israel followed by the U.S.S.R. Other nations of the world rapidly followed the lead of the United States, and Israel became an independent nation.

As part of the program for the settlement of Palestine, the United Nations had drawn up the plan for partitioning Palestine to which we refer later. The Arabs, however, were deeply concerned about the independence of Israel, and we can well understand their reasoning. Had not the Moslems occupied Palestine for the last thirteen centuries? What right did the Jews have there? The Arabs quickly showed their disagreement by disregarding the lines of separation drawn by the United Nations. War loomed on the horizon, and even the weight of the combined nations of the world seemed unable to meet the issue. The lesson of the parable is vital. The "exceeding great army" was not great in numbers, for all the Israelis in the country counting men, women, and children amounted to no more than 500,000. And they were surrounded by opposing nations which numbered more than 100 million. But the Israeli army *was great in valor, truly "an exceeding great army."*

War broke out in 1948. This was the first of four important wars between Arabs and Jews. It happened that one of the authors of this book landed in Israel right in the midst of the 1948 war. For a little while one could not be exactly sure of escaping the lines of battle.

What was the result of this war? Israel emerged the victor and one-third more land was added to the nation than that which the United Nations had originally planned. For those who see in this a providence, we might say with the hymn writer:

God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.

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Still following the parable, let us notice verse 12,

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

And that is exactly what has happened. For centuries the Jews had been eking out an existence in many countries suffering terrible persecution and all too often in constant fear of death. Silently they would read the Scriptures and wonder how God would ever fulfill His promise. But God always keeps His promise. Much of what has been happening in Israel is not merely for the sake of the present generation of Jews but for the sake of their ancestors. God said, through Moses:

Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob and. . .with Isaac, and. . .with Abraham.

I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors. . .I am the LORD (Leviticus 26:42, 45).

Scripture says,

They are beloved for their fathers' sakes (Romans 11:28). For the sake of the patriarchs (N.E.B.).

The bones have come together politically and nationally. Should we not be praying for the great spiritual revival which prophecy declares will take place in that land? It could well be the beginning of "the latter rain" before the great harvest. In the land of Israel in ancient times they could depend on the rainfall almost to the day. The early rain called "the former rain" fell just after the seed had been sown, causing it to germinate. Then came the "latter rain" just before the harvest.

The prophets used this natural phenomena to illustrate spiritual growth and maturity.

All who believe the end of human history is near should be earnestly seeking the God of our salvation on behalf of those who, as yet, do not know Him as their Redeemer because these are the days of the "latter rain" which will usher in the Messianic Age.

Those who have eyes to see recognize that the current movements in the Middle East, especially between Egypt and Israel, are clear indications that the Messiah is about to appear. When He comes He will destroy evil, root and branch, and begin His reign of righteousness.

Chapter Nine

THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL

Among all the writers of the Bible, Ezekiel, as we have already noticed, stands out as one of the most unique. Many of the ancient prophets were poets, frequently bringing their messages in poetic style. A real example of this is found in Ezekiel chapters 6 and 36 where the message of God is directed, not only to people, but in a special way to "the mountains of Israel." Note these words by the prophet:

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them,

And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.

"High places" were usually chosen as the places of worship, not only by the worshippers of Baal, but also by worshippers of Yahweh. Examples of these are Mount Moriah, Mount Carmel, and Mount Zion.

Because of Israel's apostasy God said:

And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars.

In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid

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waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that
your altars may be laid waste and made desolate. .

And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and
ye shall know that I am the LORD (Ezekiel 6: 1-7).

That certainly happened in the days of Ezekiel when the Babylonians invaded the land and destroyed the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. But six hundred years later the Jews suffered a far greater destruction when the great prophecy in Matthew 24, which dealt first with the destruction of Jerusalem, which was fulfilled and then with the downfall of the world soon to take place. The prophecy of Ezekiel had both a primary and a secondary or more complete application, first to his own time and then to a time far off in the future.

When the prophet was writing, he was a contemporary of Daniel, and much of what is set down in this prophecy was already being fulfilled. Jerusalem had already been invaded, and thousands of Jews were either slain or taken captive. But the captives taken by Nebuchadnezzar would remain under Babylonian rule for only seventy years, the later captives an even shorter period, for the decree issued by the Persian king, Cyrus, permitting the Jews to go back to their homeland as foretold by Jeremiah was soon to be fulfilled. But Ezekiel was looking far beyond his day. He envisioned a greater overthrow by the Romans.

Not only was the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem destroyed, but the Romans erected a temple to Jupiter, the chief of their gods on the very site. This was later destroyed. Then when the whole country was conquered by the followers of Islam, they erected on that temple site two mosques — the Mosque of Omar, more correctly known as the Dome of the Rock, and the Mosque of El-Aksa, mentioned in an earlier chapter.

During the first three centuries, the company of believers made rapid strides and soon began to number their membership in the hundreds of thousands. This

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caused great agitation among certain Jews. When one of God's great messengers of grace went to Antioch in Pisidia, he naturally went to the synagogue to worship on the Sabbath day. When invited by the Rabbi to speak, he unfolded the purpose of God to those at worship. They listened attentively to his message. Evidently there were some Gentiles in the congregation and they urged him to preach to them the next Sabbath. The record of that second meeting is interesting:

Almost the whole city came together to hear the Word of God (Acts 13:44).

Instead of the Jews rejoicing that Gentiles were learning the truths of God's Word, the record says,

They were filled with envy, and spoke against those things which were spoken. . .contradicting and blaspheming.

Then said the messengers:

It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

This man who spoke that day was more than just an ordinary Rabbi, he was at one time a member of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, the highest governing body in the nation. He carried a tremendous burden on his heart for his own nation. God still loved them and although the leaders had failed to accept their heaven sent Messiah, God had not disowned them. But, sad to say, many of them turned away from the clearest teachings of God's Word. That is why their enemies were permitted to drive them out of their land. Through His prophet Ezekiel, the Lord said:

And they shall know that I am the Lord, and that I have not said in vain that I would not do this evil unto them.

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! For they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence (Ezekiel 6:10, 11).

No more graphic portrayal of God's purpose can be found in Scripture than these words. Because of their evil abominations, God said they would be overthrown.

They shall fall by the sword, by the famine and by the pestilence.

How true that was! When the Romans besieged Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the shortage of food was so acute, at times, that according to historians, the people actually ate the flesh of those who died and sometimes even the flesh of their own children, "in the siege and straightness," fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah 19:9. The terrible famine that followed the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Romans was followed by pestilence and death.

That destruction and desolation because of their sins, Ezekiel foretold in chapter 6. But in chapter 36, God gives the picture of the restoration of Israel. The message the reader will notice is directed to the "mountains of Israel." We will read this from the *New English Bible*, Ezekiel 36:1-4. God said to the prophet:

Prophecy to the mountains of Israel and say, Mountains of Israel, hear the words of the LORD. These are the words of the Lord GOD: The enemy has said, "Aha! now the everlasting highlands are ours." Therefore prophesy and say, These are the words of the Lord GOD: You mountains of Israel, all round you men gloated over you and trampled you down when you were seized and occupied by the rest of the nations; your name was bandied about in the common talk of men. Therefore, listen to the words of the Lord GOD when he speaks to the mountains and hills,

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to the streams and valleys, to the desolate palaces and deserted cities, all plundered and despised by the rest of the nations round you.

When the Jews were driven out of their homeland, Gentile nations came in and took possession, some of whom began to say,

Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession (Ezekiel 36:2).

Those "ancient high places" included Mount Moriah where the magnificent Jewish Temple had stood, and which was burned to the ground by the Romans, and, as we have already noted, an idolatrous temple to the god Jupiter, was erected on the very site. Also included in those "high places" were Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives.

Still addressing the mountains of Israel, the Lord said:

All round you men gloated over you and trampled you down when you were seized and occupied by the rest of the nations; your name was bandied about in the common talk of men.

The King James Version reads,

Ye are taken up in the lips of talkers and are an infamy of the people.

The "talkers" were gossiping — evil gossip. All over the world people have gossiped concerning the Jewish people. They have cursed them, persecuted them, and slaughtered them. God's words in this chapter are most impressive:

In the fire of my jealousy I have spoken plainly against the rest of the nations, and against Edom above all. For Edom, swollen with triumphant

scorn, seized on my land to hold it up to public contempt. Therefore prophesy over the soil of Israel and say to the mountains and hills, the streams and valleys. These are the words of the Lord GOD: I have spoken my mind in jealousy and anger because you have had to endure the taunts of all nations. Therefore, says the Lord GOD, I have sworn with uplifted hand that the nations round about shall be punished for their taunts (Ezekiel 36:5-7, N.E.B.).

It is interesting to see how God is telling the mountains that certain taunting nations will be punished for taking over His land and destroying the people.

Now the tone changes completely beginning with verse 8.

But you, mountains of Israel, you shall put forth your branches and yield your fruit for my people Israel, for their homecoming is near. See now, I am for you, I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. I will plant many men upon you — the whole house of Israel. The cities shall again be inhabited and the palaces rebuilt. I will plant many men and beasts upon you; they shall increase and be fruitful. I will make you populous as in days of old and more prosperous than you were at first. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. I will make men — my people Israel — tread your paths again. They shall settle in you, and you shall be in their possession; but you shall never again rob them of their children.

What a beautiful portrayal this is of what is actually happening in the land of Israel today. "I will plant many men and beasts upon you," and "they shall increase and be fruitful," said the Lord. And He promises that the mountains shall be more populous and more prosperous than they ever were before. While some endeavor to find fulfillment of these prophecies in the return of the Jews

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from Babylon in 457 B.C., the Lord is giving a much larger picture in these chapters than was or could have been fulfilled at that time. While the remnant that returned from Babylon were given their autonomy, even the death penalty (Ezra 7:11-26). They certainly were not "more prosperous" than the nation had been under David and Solomon. Many believe these prophecies are applicable to our day and to no other.

No prophecy in Scripture is more pertinent to our generation than these verses from Ezekiel 36. The expression "mountains of Israel" is not just poetry; it is geography and represents forestry that includes scores of millions of trees planted by Israel in the last few years. It includes also, the multitudes of busy Israelis with the help of friendly Arabs who are working the land and transforming it from a barren desolate wilderness to one of the most fertile areas in all the world.

But beautiful as this little land is becoming, it is not and never can be the eternal home of the people of God. Abraham was promised that he would be "heir of the world," not a world of war and bitter hostilities, not a world where cyclones, tornadoes, and earthquakes devastate the land, but a world where sorrow and tears will never be known, where the cruel hand of death will never rob us of our loved ones; a world without want where there will be no famines, no droughts, no slums, no smog, no traffic accidents, no crime, no armies, not even a police force. That was the world that caught the vision of ancient Abraham,

For he looked for a city which hath foundations,
whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10).

His posterity were to be God's messengers carrying the good news of His purpose for the human race to every part of the earth. They failed and that failure led from bad to worse until the Messiah was not even recognized.

When Israel failed, God still carried on His purpose through the believers of the Messiah and sad as all too many chapters have been in the history of those who

professed His name, God is nevertheless using the believers comprised of people of all nations, including all believing Jews. These are carrying His message of the everlasting gospel to every corner of the globe. Nothing is more inspiring than the accomplishments of these gospel witnesses. And here is the assurance:

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (Matthew 24:14).

Soon the great work will be finished. While we view with interest the regathering of Israel, we also view with joy the preaching of the gospel to all the world. And this constitutes another of the great signs of the imminent end of the age. The Bible says:

When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28).

or as the New English Bible says: "Your liberation is near."

And here are a few of God's promises concerning the future.

Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying (Isaiah 65:19-20).

One of the greatest Hebrew prophets said,

And I John saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. . . .

And God shall wipe away all tears from their

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eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away (Revelation 21:2, 4).

That is God's ultimate purpose for His people. Not only one nation but all, who by grace have become true children of faithful Abraham, are "heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28, 29). But before the coming of that Kingdom of glory there will be for Israel and the world "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" (Daniel 12:1), during which time the last great war will be fought — the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:14). Two chapters near the close of this book picture events leading up to that final clash when the combined powers of atheism and demonism will challenge the power of the eternal God.

Chapter Ten

IMPORTANT FORECASTS

CONCERNING ISRAEL

When Frederick the Great of Prussia turned to his chaplain and asked that he give him a word why he believed the Bible was true, the chaplain thought for a moment, and then said, "Your Majesty, the Jews."

Nothing in all history so clearly reveals the veracity of Scripture as do the predictions concerning Israel. From the time this nation was delivered from Egyptian slavery under the leadership of Moses, down through all the changing centuries until now, they have been a people to be reckoned with. We have already spoken of their preservation as a distinct people, and we have seen that this was guaranteed in the simplest but clearest language. Note these words:

Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

If those ordinances depart from me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

Thus saith the LORD; If the heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD (Jeremiah 31:35-37).

Note this important truth: The election of Israel was

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confirmed by an "everlasting covenant." God gave to Abraham and his posterity the gift of the land as an "everlasting possession." To the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord said:

Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen [nations] whither ye went,

Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel (Ezek. 36:22, 32).

The land was given by God to be the peoples' inheritance and the people were taken by God for His inheritance. Said Moses,

The LORD hath taken you. . .to be unto him a people of inheritance. . .

Then he speaks of the land, calling it:

That good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance (Deut. 4:20, 21).

And further, the Bible declares:

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Romans 11:29).

Now put one more Scripture with this — the words of King David as he recounts the goodness and the greatness of God. He says,

What one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy

land, before thy people, which thou redeemest to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee forever: and thou, Lord, art become their GOD (II Samuel 7:23, 24).

In the light of these Scriptures, how can we speak lightly of Israel or the land of Israel? Through His dealings with this nation, God has illustrated principles of true moral government. Someone has said, "Israel is a grand object lesson for all nations for all time." Sin in the Jewish nation interrupted national communion in the same way that sin interrupts spiritual communion in the individual.

Many outstanding writers during the last three centuries have expressed the hope that Israel will not only exist as a nation but will become "a symbol of peace" and "a sanctuary of the prophetic ideal." Recent authors have not only expressed such hopes but they see in the events of these last decades a crystalization of their ideals.

Arnold Toynbee, British historian in his address to the *World Jewish Congress* in 1959 reminded his audience that many years ago "the Jews allowed outsiders to run away with their religion and spread it all over the world." Max L. Dimont commenting on the speech reminds us that "though the world seems unaware of it or reluctant to admit it, Judaism is already one of the most successful spiritual forces influencing and shaping the mind of man today. . . history judges not by quantity but by quality. . . Jesus was ignobly crucified by the Romans but His ideas lived to shape the world's most magnificent civilization." *The Indestructible Jew*, pp. 434-435.

Dr. Charles F. Pfeiffer, one of today's most respected theologians, in his book *The Arab Israeli Struggle* says "There can be no doubt that interest in the Bible among the British had much to do with the pro-Israel sentiment in Britain . . . Probably the strongest friends of Israel . . . are those who believe that the establishment of the state of Israel is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. They see in the contemporary events the fulfillment of Luke 21:24 'And Jerusalem shall be tramped down by foreigners until their

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day has run its course.' (New English Bible) The return to Palestine is considered a preparation for the events of the end of the age." pp109-110

Another modern author, Solomon Grayzel, writing as a Jew declares "There never was a time, in the last millennium and a half, when differences of opinion on the subject of Judaism went so deep . . . With the defeat of Nazism, a tragic era for the Jews came to an end in the western countries. But tragedy overwhelmed the Jews of Moslem lands, where a revived nationalism and sympathy for fellow Moslems defeated by Israel aroused the populations against the Jews who had for centuries lived in their midst."

He climaxes his excellent 768 page book by stating that the dream of a peaceful world was "first dreamt on Judean hills by a Hebrew prophet and sage . . . If the challenge is met, with vision, wisdom and determination, the People of Israel will continue to be a blessing among the people of the world." pp 723,726.

Some of the most forthright and challenging statements, however, concerning the immediate future of Israel are found in the book *The Acts of the Apostles* from which we now quote. . . Note these words: "Israel had stumbled and fallen, but this did not make it impossible for them to rise again." Continuing, the author says:

Among the Jews are some who, like Saul of Tarsus, are mighty in the Scriptures, and these will proclaim with wonerful power the immutability of the law of God. **The God of Israel will bring this to pass in our day** (*p. 381, Emphasis added*).

There have lived from age to age many noble, God-fearing Jewish men and women who have suffered in silence. God has comforted their hearts in affliction, and has beheld with pity their terrible situation. He has heard the agonizing prayers of those who have sought Him with all the heart for a right understanding of His Word (*Ibid, pp. 379-380*).

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Through all the tragic centuries, many of these dear people have sought God earnestly for "a right understanding of His Word" and God has heard their agonizing prayers. And we can thank God that in this climactic hour many will be led by His Spirit to the joy of full salvation.

While ours is a day of license and promiscuity when moral standards have "gone with the wind" causing many to lose their confidence in the Scriptures, some going even so far as to declare that "God is dead," yet, in spite of all that is happening, the mighty power of God is working in a special way calling out a people for Himself. Not only among the Gentiles, but also among the Jews. God's Spirit is being poured out. And from this downtrodden people, some will arise to proclaim "the immutability of God's eternal law" calling attention to what the prophets have written. Now ponder these words from that same writer.

The prophecies of judgment delivered by Amos and Hosea were accompanied by predictions of future glory. To the ten tribes, long rebellious and impenitent, was given no promise of complete restoration to their former power in Palestine. Until the end of time they were to be "wanderers among the nations." But through Hosea was given a prophecy that set before them the privilege of having a part in the final restoration that is to be made to the people of God at the close of earth's history, when the Messiah shall appear as King of kings and Lord of lords.

"Many days" the prophet declared the ten tribes were to abide, "without a king and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image [*pillar*], and without an ephod, and without a teraphim." "Afterward," the prophet continued, "shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days" (*Prophecy & Kings*, p. 298).

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The Scripture quoted is from Hosea 3:4, 5. This writer emphasizes that these prophecies were “accompanied by predictions of *future glory*” and relates it to “the final restoration. . .at the close of earth’s history.”

While we could, of course, apply the expression “the final restoration” in a spiritual sense, yet the context implies that the writer had in mind the re-establishment of Israel as a nation which is regarded by many outstanding Bible scholars as an unmistakable sign that Messiah is about to come as King of kings and Lord of lords. If so, then what is to be done must be done quickly for time is running out. These words: “Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God” (verse 5), have special meaning. Nothing could be more emphatic nor easier to understand. Furthermore, this writer says it will happen “in the latter days.” It would be difficult for “the children of Israel” to return without a homeland to return to.

It is a matter of history that the United Nations endorsed the re-establishment of Israel. Little did that august assembly realize when the action was being taken that it was actually a fulfillment of ancient prophecies concerning Israel. These words of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah are vital:

The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. For behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, saith the Lord, and I will bring them back to the land which I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it (Jeremiah 30:1-4, *Revised Standard Version*).

Notice particularly verse 24:

The fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the

intents of his mind. In the latter days you will understand this.

Some things in the divine program could not be understood at the time they were written. Nor could they be fully understood until their fulfillment. When the prophet Daniel was receiving instruction from the Lord, he said:

I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

And he said, Go thy way. Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end (Daniel 12:8, 9).

Or as Moffatt translates it, "Till the crisis at the close." When the angel Gabriel came to Daniel, he said:

Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days (Daniel 10:14).

Important things were to happen to Daniel's people — the Jews — in "the latter days," a time far removed from Daniel's day. Most evangelical scholars believe this has reference to the closing days of earth's history, when according to this Scripture we can confidently expect great things to happen. These words from the book *Evangelism*, p. 579, emphasize the same truth:

There will be many. . . from among the Jews [who]. . . will aid in preparing the way of the Lord and making straight in the desert a highway for our God. . . Jews are to have an important part to act.

Well did the prophet Isaiah say:

Hear the word of the Lord, you who revere his word: . . . Who has heard of anything like this?

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Who has seen any such thing? . . . Shall a nation be brought to birth in a moment? But Zion at the outset of her pangs, bore her sons (Isaiah 66:5, 8, N.E.B.).

Many Bible scholars saw a fulfillment of this prophecy when Israel proclaimed herself a nation on May 14, 1948. Thirty years earlier at the close of the World War, the old League of Nations, in trying to settle some of the problems created by the war, insisted that France take over Syria and that Britain assume the problems of Palestine. Both Syria and Palestine became "mandated territories" under the overall supervision of the old League of Nations.

While that arrangement was good for a limited time, it could at best be only temporary and the time came that Britain, unable to bring peace between the Arabs and the Jews, finally threw up her hands declaring she could no longer fulfill her pledge. May 14 was the day Britain left Israel. And that same day Israel proclaimed herself an independent nation. This was recognized immediately by the United States of America. And the second nation to give this nation recognition was Soviet Russia. All the other countries soon followed and Israel was seated as a member of the United Nations. In that sense, at least, it could be said that the nation Israel was "born in a day." Since then they have made great strides materially and culturally. We could wish the same might be said of the nation's development spiritually.

Note this statement on the subject of the Jews from the author of *Prophets & Kings*:

There is to be true, sincere. . . work done for the Jews. A little is being done, but it is as nothing compared with what might be done. There is a decided failure to take hold of this work as we ought. Let the people of the Lord meditate and pray over this matter (Letter 42, 1912).

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; as I thought to punish you when your fathers provoked me to

wrath. . . so again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not (Zech. 8:14, 15).

And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen [nations], O house of Judah and house of Israel; so will I save you and ye shall be a blessing. . . Behold I will save my people from the east country and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in Jerusalem (Zech. 8:13, 7, 8, Letter 42).

This writer earnestly declared the "Lord's people should *meditate and pray* over this matter." How much meditation and prayer are God's people giving to this matter? How many special periods of prayer for the Jews are called for among the believers today?

This author declares that the work of which the prophet Zechariah writes "is a type of the spiritual restoration to be wrought for Israel before the end of time" (Ibid).

While this prophecy had a limited application to the return from Babylon in days of Ezra and Nehemiah, its greater application seems to be not in the "former days" but in the "latter days" — the time in which we live. Here is God's promise:

I will be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts.

For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. (Zech. 8:11, 12).

Zechariah seems to imply that after the nation's restoration there will be great increase in the fruits and grains and "the heavens shall give their dew." And those who possess these things will be "a remnant" of the people. Could that not refer to the generation living now, just before the Messiah's coming?

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Under the reign of David and Solomon the nation was all one kingdom. But when Solomon died his son, Rehoboam, came to the throne and made a very foolish speech to the representatives of the kingdom who came asking for tax relief. He declared that instead of decreasing their taxes he would greatly increase those taxes. That speech split the kingdom. Ten tribes joining together formed the House of Israel in the North, and the two tribes in the south formed the House of Judah.

About two hundred years later the Assyrians invaded the northern kingdom of Israel. They destroyed their cities and scattered the people among the Medes. The House of Israel never was restored. One hundred and fifty years after the Assyrian captivity, the Babylonians overthrew the House of Judah and destroyed Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar took the people captive fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy, and they served the king of Babylon seventy years (Jeremiah 25:4-12).

When the empire of Babylon collapsed, Cyrus, the Persian, released the Jews, even providing money for the re-establishment of their homeland. But never since Nebuchadnezzar overthrew the kingdom of Judah have the Jews had a ruling king. A small remnant of the people went back to their homeland but they were never more than a province of the ruling empire — first Persia, then Greece and lastly Rome. The Herods were only puppets of the Roman Empire.

Zechariah, the prophet, was greatly used of the Lord in stirring up the spirit of the Jews and helping in their re-establishment as a nation. But there was no throne and no king and the Scriptures are very specific concerning the identity of the people that returned under the decree of Cyrus. Those who went back were largely the posterity of those captured by the Babylon armies seventy years earlier. The Scripture makes it clear:

Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity; of those which had been carried away, **whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, had carried away into Babylon** (Ezra 2:1, emphasis supplied).

These were not ten tribes or twelve tribes. They were two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, with a few scattered Levites who acted as priests for the people. And they came from the east, from Babylon. But through the prophet Zechariah God says:

I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country.

In the return from Babylon none came from the West; they came only from the East.

And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness (Zech. 8:8).

The prophet envisioned a real spiritual revival like it was in the days of Josiah. Isaiah is even more specific, he says:

The Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isaiah 11:11, 12).

The *first* recovery was in the days of Cyrus and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. The *second* recovery seems clearly to be just before the Messiah's coming in glory. The "ensign for the nations," spoken of in verse ten as a "root of Jesse," is without question Yeshua, the Messiah. He becomes the Ensign for the nations.

The prophet Ezekiel, a captive in Babylon in the days

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of Nebuchadnezzar, knew the northern kingdom of Israel had been overthrown by the Assyrians and scattered among the Medes. He knew also that the southern kingdom, Judah, had been overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar and the people taken into Babylonia. But in vision he too was permitted to witness their re-establishment in the land of Israel, followed by a great spiritual awakening among his people. Through this prophet, the Lord said:

For I will take you from among the heathen [nations], and gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land (Ezekiel 36:24).

"All countries" surely has a wider connotation than just Babylonia from which the people came in the days of Persia in 536 and 457 B.C. Having gathered them from "all countries," the prophet continues to speak the message of God:

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

This is the Redeemer speaking to a redeemed people. Then He says:

And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

I will also save you from all your uncleannesses (Ezek. 36:25-29).

to re-emphasize His promise, the Lord said:

In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden.

And what will be the result? Note these words:

Then the heathen [nations] that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it (Ezek. 36:33-36)

These verses had a partial fulfillment in the days of Ezra. But they are having a far greater fulfillment today. However, their greatest and final fulfillment will be in the kingdom of glory to come.

No prophet has spoken more definitely concerning Israel than Ezekiel. His message for his own generation was unmistakable but his message concerning the future of his people is just as clear. We often spiritualize these chapters or claim that these prophecies are all "conditional," depending for their fulfillment upon certain actions by the people. But such information leaves much to be desired. Through the years earnest teachers of truth have followed that practice. But are we wise to close our eyes to such positive promises backed up by a clear "Thus saith the Lord"?

In this chapter we have endeavored to place, not only clear statements from Scripture, but statements from other writers. For example, *Prophets and Kings*, published years ago traces the history of Israel from the days of David. The author notes definitely the spiritual lapses under the rulership of certain kings; then through

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the tragic times of the Babylonian captivity and on to the return of a remnant in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah under the protection of the Persian king, Cyrus, when, as we noted, some forty-two thousand were re-established in the land of their forefathers.

That book, *Prophets and Kings*, was first published under the title, *The Captivity and Restoration of Israel*. It opens up not only the *first* restoration led by Zerubbabel, the governor, and by Ezra, the priest, but it carries the reader down to the time when the nation, scattered to the very ends of the earth, would be brought back "the second time" and for a short space established in the little land of Israel as a sign of God's power and purpose for this once-scattered nation. Witnessing the divine deliverance, many in the nations of the world will in some way come to know the living God. While these Scriptures can be applied spiritually to God's people gathered out of all nations, yet it was to the Jewish nation in particular that God was speaking.

His promise to Abraham included much more than that narrow strip of land on the east of the Mediterranean Sea for in Romans 4:13, we read that Abraham would be "heir of the world." That promise was fantastic, too big for him, or even for us, to fully comprehend. But we can at least try to grasp it. Some readers may have to lay aside a few preconceived ideas as the authors of *All Eyes On Israel* had to do many years ago. But the larger concept of God's purpose for His ancient people adds much to our understanding of God's revelation and in no way does it undermine the beauty of truth; it enhances it. To change one's prophetic viewpoint is not easy, but to know God's plan for the present and the future is worth everything. The following counsel given years ago by the author of *Prophets and Kings* is both challenging and revealing.

Very many teachers are content with a supposition in regard to the truth. They have crude ideas, and are content with a surface work in searching for truth, taking for granted that they have all that is essential. They take the sayings of

others for truth, being too indolent to put themselves to diligent, earnest labor, represented in the Word as "digging for hidden treasure." But man's inventions are not only unreliable, they are dangerous for they place man where God should be. . . .

Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. Investigation of every point that has been received as truth will richly repay the searcher; he will find precious gems. And in closely investigating every jot and tittle which we think is established truth, in comparing Scripture with Scripture **we may discover errors in our interpretation of Scripture.** Christ would have the searcher of His Word sink the shaft deeper into the mines of truth. If the search is properly conducted, jewels of inestimable value will be found (*Review and Herald*, July 12, 1898, Emphasis supplied).

It is not flattering to think that there may be errors in one's interpretation of Scripture and consequently of one's understanding of truth. If that be the case, the sooner we discover it and readjust our thinking, the better. An example of some unfortunate errors in the interpretations of Scripture is the claim made by certain scholars that when the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity in the days of Ezra that the posterity of those taken into captivity by the Assyrian conquerors two centuries earlier were also included among the returning exiles. Such a claim is contrary to both history and the Bible. The Scriptures state very clearly just who those were that returned as we have already noticed. There is therefore no need for us to guess or imagine who the exiles were.

In Ezra 2:1 we read:

Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of

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Babylon had carried away into Babylon, and came unto Jerusalem and Judah.

Then follow the names of those who returned.

Speaking of those taken by Assyria we read:

"The king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria and placed them in Halah and in Habor. . . and in the cities of the Medes" (II Kings 17:6). These captives by Assyria did not return to Jerusalem and Judah. In fact five hundred years after Ezra's day they were still dispersed among the Gentiles (See John 7:35; James 1:1).

It is sometimes suggested that the offering of twelve goats at the dedication of the rebuilt temple (Ezra 6:17) is proof that all the tribes had returned. Those were worship offerings *on behalf of all Israel*, most of whom were still dwelling among the Gentiles. One author declares that, "Until the end of time they [the ten tribes] were to be 'wanderers among the nations' " (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 298). And most of them still are.

These challenging words, spoken nineteen centuries ago to the doctors of the law in Jerusalem could well be repeated today:

Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God (Matthew 22:29).

The regathering of Israel from all the lands of earth, their re-establishment in this ancient land, provides not only evidence that compels deeper study for a clearer understanding of divine prophecies, but also provides an unparalleled opportunity for emphasizing in a new way the mighty truths of God's Word to the people whose prophets wrote the great messages of God for their day and ours.

Chapter Eleven

IS MODERN ISRAEL'S RETURN SCRIPTURAL?

Is there any prophetic significance in the restoration of the Jews to the land of their fathers? Why should this nation be restored when other nations such as the Babylonians have passed from the pages of history without even as much as a mention today? Yet by strange contrast, the Jews are still with us. Does this have any real significance?

Every student knows that God has used certain nations in the past such as Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece to carry out His purposes. Could it be that He is now using restored Israel? Sad to say, many are returning with little regard for the religion of their fathers. Yet in spite of their attitude to God and His Holy Word, definite promises were made to their patriarchal ancestors long ago. Could it be that we are seeing today the fulfillment of those promises?

God's ultimate purpose for Israel and the world is clearly foretold in Scripture. He will not only make this little land blossom like a rose, but ultimately, "He will create new heavens and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1-3). The Scriptures say:

We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (11 Peter 3:13).

The purpose for God's people at the end of the age is wonderful beyond words. But there are certain other

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promises which undoubtedly will have their fulfillment *before* the end of the age. Some of these promises are concerned with Israel, such as this in the book of Hosea:

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things?
prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of
the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in
them; but the transgressors shall fall therein
(Hosca 14:9).

This appeal to the wise and the prudent is accompanied by a promise: "He shall understand these things," and "He shall know them." To understand God's plan there are vital principles in prophetic interpretation which we dare not overlook. One of these was made very clear when the great Teacher said to His followers:

These things have I spoken unto you that, when it
is come to pass, ye might believe (John 14:29).

Not until a prophecy is being fulfilled, or coming to pass, can we really understand it. Note, He did not say, "These things have I spoken unto you in order that you might become expert prognosticators, telling everybody what is going to happen." Rather, it was that they might be able interpreters of events when they actually come to pass. And that principle was repeated three times during that important conversation. The principle is clear — *only when the event is actually happening* can we truly understand it.

Now concerning Israel we face an important fact of history: Israel, without a homeland for nearly two thousand years, has a homeland today. Israel, for hundreds of years the object of hate and persecution, has been strangely preserved as a people for more than nineteen centuries, and during all that time had no homeland and no temple. They had no center of worship, yet they have survived. In spite of the bitter persecution through which they have passed, they are still with us. Then in these "latter days," just before the end of human history, we find at least one fifth of the Jews in the world

restored to their homeland. We might well ask, why?

In the Scripture we read that it is God who "removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Daniel 2:21). He has used some strange characters in the past to carry out His purpose. He even called Nebuchadnezzar "My servant" and Cyrus, the Persian, "My anointed." Now let us begin to ponder this thought: the nation Israel could never have been a nation in the first place and could never have been preserved had it not been in the providence of God. Is it too hard for us to believe that He has overruled in the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a nation?

It is distressing to hear some declaring that the restoration of Israel as a nation is the outworking of the devil's plan. To claim that the devil set them up as a nation where God did not want them to be a nation does not merit the thoughtful consideration of serious-minded people. The Bible clearly states that it is God alone who sets up kingdoms (See Daniel 2:20-21). God is the all-powerful Creator of the heavens and the earth. Satan can do nothing at any time except as God permits it. If we have confidence in the Bible as the Word of God, then let us look candidly at what God has said on these things. Through the prophet Hosea, He says:

The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image [pillar] and without an ephod, and without a teraphim:

Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days (Hosea 3:4,5).

These are surely powerful statements. Have the children of Israel been "many days without a king" and "without a sacrifice"? To ask the question is to answer it. For twenty-five centuries they have had no king and for nineteen centuries no temple nor center of worship. This was what Hosea, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saw. And many

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other prophets had also seen — that Israel would be scattered among the nations, but they would, at the end of the age return and “seek the Lord their God and David their king.”

The original King David had been dead more than two hundred years when Hosea wrote those words, so it could not possibly refer to the King David who lived and reigned 1011-97 B.C. But Scripture speaks about the Messiah sitting on the throne of His father David! How specific these statements are! Some time after their return to the Lord they will seek their Messiah, or in other words, “David their king.” While many Jews are now returning to Israel in unbelief, yet can we not envision the time when under the mighty influence of the Holy Spirit, thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, will accept Yeshua as their own Messiah. The New English Bible reads:

They will again seek the Lord their God and David their king, and turn anxiously to the Lord for his bounty in days to come (Hosea 3:5).

Through another prophet the Lord says,

For I will take you from among the heathen [*nations*], and gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.

But more wonder still, He says:

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (Ezek. 36:24-36).

These texts are often applied in a general way to all

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who turn from unbelief and accept God's salvation. And that is not wrong, for all who surrender to the claims of God will have a change of heart, but the prophet is here speaking particularly of a people who will be gathered out of the nations, and when they are gathered out, he says:

The heathen [nations] shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes (Ezek. 36:23).

The New English Bible reads:

When they see that I reveal my holiness through you, the nations will know that I am the Lord.

For I will take you from among the heathen [nations], and gather you out of **all** countries, and will bring you into your own land (Ezek. 36:23, 24. Emphasis added).

The Jerusalem Bible reads:

When I display My holiness for your sake before their eyes.

These promises were made while the Jews were captives in Babylon. After seventy years about forty-two thousand returned from Babylon. However, this Scripture speaks of a people being gathered "out of *all* countries" not just Babylon, and brought into "their own land" and when that happens *the Lord God says, "I will be sanctified in you."*

In spite of the fact that many have returned to the land of Israel with little or no belief, yet Scripture indicates that the Holy Spirit will work a change in the hearts of many. Is not the same God who opened the eyes of Saul and turned him into another man able to do for a people what He did for that one man and thousands of others of that generation? The same power that prostrated Saul of Tarsus can bring a nation to her knees

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in repentance (Zech. 12:10-12) and thousands will turn to God with confession.

Through the prophet Hosea, God said:

Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy nor knowledge of God in the land (Hosea 4:1).

How tragic that is! By nature they are children of Abraham, yet they are without a knowledge of Abraham's God, without a knowledge of their lost condition. But in some mysterious way the Holy Spirit will bring great numbers of this nation under conviction of the Lord's love and they will say:

Come let us return unto the LORD, for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up (Hosea 6:1).

Many at that time will feel the tender wounds of His love and recognizing their lost condition will reach out to Him who has "healing in His wings." Desirous of a deeper understanding of God's purpose, they will turn to the Scriptures, which for generations so many have been neglecting. And here is the Lord's promise through the same prophet:

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you (Hosea 10:12).

Hosea seems to speak more definitely than many of the old-time prophets. Through him the Lord says:

I have spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets. . .

And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved (Hosea 12:10,13).

The same God who brought Israel out of Egypt by the prophet Moses, who preserved the nation during nearly two thousand years of wandering and persecution, watching over them while in tragic ghettos, hearing their prayers and noting their earnest seeking for His counsel as they read the prophets, is the One who has promised to restore them to the land of their fathers. It would be natural to think they would rejoice in being able to follow the Word of God without fear. But with many, such is not the case.

Some time ago we were speaking with a Jewish gentleman who had fled the Hitler persecution in Germany. We were guests being entertained in the Kibbutz in which he was the leader. He was a kind, cultured man and was showing us around this interesting community farm. When we asked about the synagogue, he replied quite definitely, "Oh, we have no synagogue here and we do not want one. Worship is not a part of our program." Surprised and even disappointed, we inquired the reason. These were his words, "We have suffered so much because of our fathers' religion and we want none of it here. We do not want our children to suffer as we have. So we are bringing them up without any religion. If, after they are grown they want to turn religious, well, it will be their own concern and not ours."

We learned that this particular Kibbutz was not an isolated instance. Many other Kibbutzim, or community farms, have neither synagogue nor rabbi. Yet God has seen fit to preserve this nation and that preservation has been in spite of the attitude of many toward the faith of their fathers.

To this people the Lord says,

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help.

I will be thy king: where is any other that may

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save thee in all thy cities? (Hosea 13:9, 10).

Pleading like a father with his child, God says,

Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, turn to me and
I will be thy help.

The time is coming when Israel will need all the help she can get. But her real strength is not in weapons nor in political strategy but in the living God. He who has preserved this nation through all the tragic centuries when dictators determined their extinction, has pledged Himself to be their Deliverer. But they must return to Him. The prophet Isaiah is quoted in Romans as saying:

There shall come out of Sion, the Deliverer and
shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Romans
11:26).

This promise applies, of course, to all who turn from sin, but in a special way to this nation. None other can save Israel but God, the God of their fathers, the Creator and Sustainer of life. He alone is their Saviour, as the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah:

Surely they are my people, children that will not
lie; so He was their Saviour. . . in His love and in
His pity He redeemed them (Isaiah 63:8,9).

These words were spoken to one of Israel's leaders, a "ruler of the Jews," Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin. He was eager to know the truth of Salvation. That night he learned much. His mind was directed to Israel in the wilderness:

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the
wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted

up:

That whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have eternal life. . .

Some day soon, according to the Scriptures, multitudes in the land of Israel will turn to Him whom they have despised and rejected these nineteen centuries. They will accept Him as their own Messiah. Through Zechariah, God says:

I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem. . .

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. (Zech. 12:10, 11; 13:1).

Many wonderful sermons have been preached from this verse which speaks of the fountain of cleansing, and there is nothing wrong about that, but the primary application is to the inhabitants of literal Jerusalem.

In anticipation of that day, the Lord pleads through the prophet Hosea:

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips ("The fruit of our lips" R.S.V.)

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And the promise of the Lord is,

I will heal their faithlessness, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from them (Hosea 14:1, 2, A.R.S.V.).

While these Scriptures doubtless had an application in the day when they were written, yet their greatest application might well be at the end of the age. Could God be waiting for His ancient people Israel to return fully to Him? He wants to heal them of all their iniquity. Many of the Hebrew prophets have spoken of this great spiritual awakening.

One prominent writer envisions the fulfillment of this prophecy and declares:

The time ~~has~~ come . . . when there will be as many [Jews convinced] in a day as there were on the day of Pentecost. . . and we are to see the salvation of God (*Review and Herald*, June 29, 1905).

We might well wonder how God will be able to break through Israel's indifference. But He can, and He will in these "latter days." Along with the people of many nations, great numbers of Jews will also turn to Him in sincere repentance. God's Word will not fail. Prophecy will be fulfilled. Zechariah was evidently envisioning something of this when he wrote:

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people and the inhabitants of many cities:

And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.

Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem,

and to pray before the LORD.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you (Zech. 8:20-23).

Does this not suggest a real movement of the Spirit of God? It could apply to others than Jews, but the language indicates clearly to whom the Lord, through the prophet, was primarily speaking. Not all Jews will turn to the Lord confessing Him as their Messiah, yet great numbers as individuals will. And this God will use to impress the unbelieving world.

This Scripture speaks of people representing all the languages of the nations being called to worship the living God. When the Spirit of God is poured out, multitudes will turn to God in confession and find the joy of Salvation. May He hasten that day.

Chapter Twelve

EVERY JEW A MIRACLE

No more fascinating history was ever recorded than that of the Jew. Have you ever thought about it? Every nation that was ever conquered and driven out of its homeland has, within two or three centuries, disappeared having been amalgamated and absorbed either by their conquerors or at least by the surrounding nations. Note these: the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Moabites, the Hivites, the Philistines, the Vandals, the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, even the Babylonians. Even one time rulers of the world such as the Babylonians and the Romans have entirely disappeared.

Not a single individual from any of these nations can be found in the world today. But what about the Jews? They were conquered and driven from their homeland by the Romans in A.D. 70. But were they absorbed by the people who conquered them! No! Every other nation that suffered a similar fate has disappeared, but the Jew has remained. He is still a Jew no matter where he may be found — in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, or Australia. Wherever he is, he is still a Jew, speaking the languages of those where he lives, yet somewhat separate and distinct from his neighbors.

That very fact challenges our sociologists. The Jews are still a nation — a miracle indeed. Nations have come and nations have gone but Israel still lives on; even though for nearly two thousand years these persecuted people have been without a king, without a homeland, without

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even a temple. Their dream, however, had been that someday according to statements of their prophets, they would return. This has kept the flame of hope burning in their hearts. And return they did. God made a promise to the Hebrew race through Abraham, when He said:

I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

Ponder this. Those who have blessed the Jewish people have themselves been blessed. But what has happened to those nations which have persecuted the Jews? Take Babylon as an example. When Nebuchadnezzar overthrew the kingdom of Judah, destroyed their temple and their city, and took the Jews as captives to Babylon, it was never his intention to permit the Jews to return to their homeland. But God declared through His prophets that they would go back and furthermore, that Babylon itself would be conquered. History records how the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon. The same God who said the Babylonians would be conquered also said the Persians would permit the Jews to go back to rebuild their temple and later their city, Jerusalem. More remarkable still, the Persians even paid the building costs!

Now think: The Babylonians are not with us today. As a nation they have gone into oblivion. They amalgamated with other nations and have been lost. On the other hand the Persians, who befriended the Jews permitting them to go back to their homeland, are still in existence. Their country is known today as Iran.

Now let us think about Rome. They attacked the Jews and scattered the nation. Three centuries later barbarian nations came from the north and from the east and attacked the empire at its heart. The "eternal city" Rome was finally overthrown and the empire destroyed. All that is left of the once-strong empire of Rome are the vast ruins and broken sculptures showing the violence and vengeance of the barbarian hosts that swept in. The proud palaces of the Caesars are desolate today. The

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mightiest kingdom of history sank into the depths of oblivion. Her once-famous rulers are forgotten except as we refer to them in studying history.

Later the Lombards, one of the ten barbarian nations, moved down from the north and took over the fragments of the Roman kingdom. These Lombardi are known as Italians today because they occupy the section of the empire known as Italy. But the Italians of today are not really the Romans of yesterday.

When Rome conquered Israel and drove the Jews from their homeland, she took multitudes of slaves from Israel to the capital. These slaves largely built the Colosseum in Rome. But where are the Romans today? They have disappeared, having been amalgamated among the nations. There are no real Romans, as such; they are gone. But what about the Jewish nation whose annihilation their conquerors were determined to accomplish? They are still here.

The rulers of the Jewish nation were killed; the city of Jerusalem was destroyed; the Temple was burned to the ground; and more than a million and a half adults were slaughtered. Practically all the youth of the nation were sold as slaves. Approximately one million men and women were taken as slaves to Rome and other cities. But again we ask, where is the empire of Rome today? On the other hand, the Jewish nation, which the Romans tried to destroy, still lives and thrives and multiplies. True they were scattered to every land of earth but as we write, many of their posterity are back in their homeland again. Yes, every nation that became an enemy of Israel has disappeared. But the Jewish nation which has been persecuted, oppressed, enslaved, banished, spoiled, and slaughtered by the millions has survived.

More than fourteen centuries before the common era, Moses gave the nation the message of God in these words:

I will scatter you among the heathen [*nations*],
and will draw out a sword after you: and your
land shall be desolate and your cities waste. . .

And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. . .

And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly. .
(Leviticus 26:33, 36, 44).

The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth (Deuteronomy 28:25).

Sometimes this Scripture is made to apply to the captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, but it is obvious this has reference to a much larger scattering than the Babylonian captivity. And these are but a few of the many Scriptures that forecast Jewish history in advance. The nation was told what would happen to their posterity. Did it happen? Yes, and it occurred exactly as God said it would.

We repeat, that despite the fact that the Jews were scattered to the four corners of the earth, and became the objects of the bitterest persecution, they have nevertheless remained a separate and distinct people among the nations of the world. Millions of people have settled in America from various parts of the world and after a few generations they have lost their identity; they have become absorbed. With the Jew it is different. Even after he becomes an American citizen, he remains somewhat separate and distinct.

What has kept this people separate and distinct? Why have they not been amalgamated? Could it be that God in His providence has kept them and is keeping them for a purpose? As we have noticed in practically every country of the world where the Jew has gone, he has been persecuted. If by becoming amalgamated and losing one's identity he could avoid persecution, would he not do it? Generally, the Jew did not think so. In the face of persecution and even death, this people have remained distinct and separate.

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Moses repeated the words of the Lord to Israel in Leviticus 26:32:

I will bring this land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

Their homeland was to lie in ruins and their enemies were to dwell therein. No prophecy in Scripture has ever been more accurately fulfilled than this. Where in history can we find a record so terrible, so horrible, so atrocious, so bewildering as the record of the persecution of the Jewish nation?

During the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. almost two million Jews were either slaughtered, starved to death, or sold into slavery — which was even worse than death for it was actually a living death. Then sixty years later over half a million more were destroyed. History records the plight of the Jews during the Middle Ages. But that is too frightful to mention. The Spanish Inquisition was responsible for the lives of between one and two million Jews. But the worst and most diabolical destruction was in the days of Hitler, when six million Jews perished; the bodies of hundreds of thousands being rendered down for fat to make soap!

Hitler was not the first to attack the Jews in his country. Millman, the historian, speaking of the torture and tragedy of the Jews says, "No fanatic set the populace in commotion, no public calamity took place, no atrocious or extravagant report was propagated, but it fell upon the heads of this unhappy caste. In Germany the black plague raged in all its fury; and wild superstition charged the Jews, as elsewhere, with causing and aggravating the misery, and themselves enjoying a guilty comparative security amid the universal desolation. . . [undoubtedly they were not affected as were others because of their following Moses' dietary laws.]

"The same dark stories were industriously propagated, readily believed and ferociously avenged; of

fountains poisoned, children crucified. . . Still persecuted in one city they fled to another and thus spread over the whole [country]. Oppressed by the nobles, anathematized by the clergy, hated as rivals in trade by burghers in commercial cities, despised and abhorred by the populace, their existence is known by the chronicle. . . of their massacres" (*History of the Jews*, Vol. 3, pp. 222,223).

"Massacred by thousands, yet springing up again from their undying stock, the Jews appear at all times in all regions. Their perpetuity, their national immortality, is at once the most curious problem of the political inquirer, to the religious man a subject of profound and awful admiration" (Ibid. Vol. 2, pp. 298, 299). The fact that there are some sixteen million Jews in the world today, despite the Hitler persecution when a third of the nation perished, proves that God's statement about this nation's continued existence is true.

To better understand the purpose of God for this people let us notice the Word of the Lord as it came to the prophet Ezekiel. For clarity, we will read from the *Revised Standard Version*.

Son of man, when the House of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their doings. . .

So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood which they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it.

I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries; in accordance with their conduct and their deeds I judged them (Ezek. 36:16-19, R.S.V.).

We are left to wonder why the Jews were dispersed throughout the world. God said that when they dwelt in the land they "defiled it." Consequently, He poured out His wrath upon them for the blood which they had shed. So the Lord says, "I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries."

Continuing we read:

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But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that men said of them, "These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of his land."

But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel caused to be profaned among the nations to which they came (Verses 20, 21).

What pathos in those words! — "When they came to the nations wherever they came, they profaned my holy name." There were many ways in which they could and did profane that Holy Name. Yet despite their faithlessness, God has carried out His purpose; He has used and is using others to carry His message of salvation to the nations. Despite the failure of His ancient people, we read this promise:

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come (Matthew 24:14).

Many great signs tell us that we are living in the closing days of earth's history. Prominent among those signs are these two — the spreading of the gospel to all the world and the regathering of scattered Israel from the ends of the earth.

Now why is God bringing these people to the land of their fathers? He states it clearly in His Word:

Therefore say to the House of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came.

And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among them; and the nations will know that I am the LORD, says the Lord, GOD, when through you I vindicate my

**holiness before their eyes.(Ezek. 36:22, 23,
R.S.V.)**

Note again these words:

**It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am
about to act, but for the sake of my holy name.**

**What God is doing and purposes to complete for Israel is
not for their sakes but rather for His own Holy Name's
sake. In verse 24 we read:**

**For I will take you from the nations, and gather
you from all countries, and bring you into your
own land.**

**Even though the Jews were disobedient to God and
rejected their own prophets, even though He drove them
from their homeland because of their disobedience and
for their having profaned His Holy Name, yet God says,
"I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all
countries, and bring you into your own land."**

**After almost two thousand years of wandering over
the face of the earth, and being ridiculed as "the
wandering Jew," this nation is being at last restored to the
land of Israel. Not all their problems are yet solved, and
God has much to do yet for Israel spiritually. But He only
deals with us spiritually as individuals. Yet He has clearly
indicated His purpose. He promises to cleanse them and
make every one who will accept His salvation an object of
His grace.**

**I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you
shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from
all your idols, will I cleanse you.**

**A new heart also will I give you, and a new
spirit will I put within you: and I will take away
the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give
you a heart of flesh.**

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause

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you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God (Ezek. 36:25-28).

The Scriptures indicate that *after the nation has returned* there is to be a great awakening among the Jews. Might this not, in part, be what the ancient prophets spoke of as the "latter rain"? A great spiritual refreshing is clearly predicted at the end of the age. There will be a great world-wide spiritual harvest.

From the study of prophecy we learn that when the Jews go back to the land of their fathers, most of them return in unbelief, their hearts like stone. And they will continue to have hearts of stone until God Himself intervenes by His Holy Spirit and gives them hearts of flesh. This is exactly what happened to Saul of Tarsus, who later became such a great teacher. God dealt with him, removing his heart of stone and giving him a heart of flesh. What God did for that one man, and what He did for thousands of other Jews of that generation, He evidently purposes to do in some mysterious way for many thousands of Jews before the end of human history. And that is already beginning. The ancient prophets pictured a great turning to God among the Jewish people before the coming of the Messiah. Would it not be wonderful if this were to begin in the land of Israel and from there spread to Jews all over the world? Not that every Jew will accept Yeshua as the Messiah and his personal Saviour, but the Scriptures indicate that thousands will hear God's call and turn to the Lord as they did on the Day of Pentecost when three thousand believers were immersed in one day! (Acts 2:41).

Why did the Jews not accept the Messiah when He walked among them? According to the Bible, Satan had blinded them spiritually; they did not recognize Him. The Scriptures says:

Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the

fulness of the Gentiles be come in (Romans 11:25).

Or as the translation of the *New English Bible* reads:

Partial blindness has come upon Israel only until the Gentiles have been admitted in full strength.

Then we read in verse 27:

For this is my covenant unto them [*Jews*], when I shall take away their sins.

The similarity of the language here to that of the prophet Ezekiel when he outlined God's plan for Israel is significant:

And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine on you.

I will make the fruit of the tree and the increases of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.

Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds (Ezek. 36:29-31, R.S.V.).

It seems this will happen after the people have been restored to their homeland and have experienced a spiritual awakening. Note these words:

It is not for your sake, that I will act, says the Lord GOD; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.

We repeat that all God has done in the past and will do in the future for Israel is *not for their sakes* but "for His Holy Name's sake" and "for the sake of the patriarchs."

Then the prophet continues in verses 33-36:

Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt.

And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by.

And they will say, "This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now inhabited and fortified."

Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places, and replanted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do so.

In the Negev Desert, which was a barren, desolate waste, there are today water pipes, great in diameter, carrying water from the Sea of Galilee. This one-time desert land is now being irrigated. This area, which for fifteen hundred years was just a desolation, is now covered with beautiful orchards, vineyards, groves, and lush fields of grain. By comparison it surely is "like the garden of Eden." And waste cities which had been little more than heaps of ruins are today being rebuilt. In verses 37 and 38 we read:

Thus says the Lord GOD: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their men like a flock.

Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

Not only will the Jews be regathered from many lands and come to know the living God, but through His dealings

with Israel the nations of the world will also come to know that God is indeed the Lord of history. His dealings with this people in "the latter days" will evidently make a tremendous impression upon the unbelieving world. These words of God should stab us awake:

When they see that I reveal my holiness through you, the nations will know that I am the LORD says the Lord GOD (Verse 23, N.E.B.).

Agnostics, atheists, infidels, and many other groups who know nothing of God and His righteousness will, in some way, be brought face to face with the moving power of the Living God. And when they discover what is really happening to Israel and realize that it is a fulfillment of prophecies written two and a half millenniums ago, there will come to them a new conviction that God's Word is truth.

There is not a nation in the world where the Jews have not gone. Everywhere they have been oppressed just as the Scriptures said they would be. Can you point to a nation anywhere that has been happy to receive the Jews, that has welcomed them with open arms? While Moses foretold they would be literally "rooted" out of their land, (Deuteronomy 29:25, 28) yet through this great leader God also said:

I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it (Leviticus 26:32).

Long before Israel became a nation, Dean Stanley wrote in his *Syria and Palestine*, p. 117: "Palestine above all other countries in the world is a land of ruins." Then he reminds us of what Moses said, " 'the stranger shall come from a far land' (Deuteronomy 29:22). Though ruined, desolate, bereft of her own people, Palestine was, nevertheless, to be pre-eminently a land of pilgrimages." Is there any other spot on earth to which so many pilgrims journey? Scores of different languages are used daily in

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the city of Jerusalem.

A number of years ago we happened to be in Jerusalem on the Jewish New Year's Eve. Throughout that night we attended services in more than twenty different synagogues, and each used a different language. Having come from many different lands, they naturally brought with them the languages and the customs of those countries.

Today, of course, Israelis are all studying Hebrew and this unifies their thought. But if the power of God as in the days of old were to fall again on that old city, it would be a miracle that would be flashed around the world. While every Jew is himself a miracle, having been preserved in spite of persecutions and wars, yet this would be the greatest miracle of all. The prophet Zechariah evidently envisioned something of that kind when he wrote these moving promises:

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his lost son. . .

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness (Zechariah 12:10; 13:1).

What Israel has accomplished materially, culturally, and politically in recent years is tremendous. Her greatest need, however, is a national spiritual awakening. And some of the greatest thinkers of our time are deeply concerned with the spiritual possibilities of Israel's program. Dr. Albert Einstein, to whom our generation owes so much, in 1935 expressed this need. He said:

The rebuilding of Palestine is for us Jews not a mere matter of paramount importance for the Jewish people. Palestine is first and foremost, not a refuge for East European Jews, but the

incarnation of a reawakening sense of national solidarity. . . .Palestine will become a cultural home for all Jews. . .a unifying ideal and a source of spiritual health for the Jews of every country (*About Zionism: Speeches and Letters*, pp. 208, 212, 213).

On the eve of each Independence Day, following the blast of the trumpet, this prayer is recited: "May it be Thy will, O Jehovah our God and the God of our fathers, that as we have been granted the dawn of redemption, so may we be granted to hear the trumpet of the Messiah" (cited in *The Rebirth of the State of Israel*, p. 88).

Jews and Gentiles alike might well be praying that prayer not just once a year but every day. May the God of Israel help us all to be ready for that mighty trumpet blast so soon to be heard. And part of the prayer at the morning service of every Independence Day reads: "He who performed miracles for our fathers and for us and who redeemed Israel. . .speedily redeem us with a complete redemption and we shall sing before Him a new song. Hallelujah" (*Yikum Yom Ha' Atzmaut*, pp. 28, 47).

Chapter Thirteen

**CONFLICT WHERE
THERE SHOULD BE PEACE**

We begin this chapter with a deep sense of responsibility to the nations of the Middle East. In our travels through these lands we have found some of the kindest people on earth, folk who truly love God and their neighbors. The bitter hostility evident at times between the Arabs and the Jews is to be deeply regretted. This, of course, is not new; it has existed down through the centuries ever since the days of Abraham, who it must be remembered, is the father of both nations. Two sons were born to Abraham by two different mothers. The elder son, Ishmael, was born of Hagar, the servant in the Abraham home; the younger son, Isaac, was born of Sarah. The great Arab nations are largely the posterity of Ishmael, while the Hebrew people are the posterity of Isaac.

All went well in Abraham's household for the first few years. But there arose at last some misunderstanding between the two mothers necessitating Hagar's separation from the family. The Lord had already promised that the posterity of Isaac would become a great nation. But what about the posterity of Ishmael, the son of Hagar? This troubled Abraham, and he took the matter to the Lord in prayer. God answered his prayer for Ishmael saying,

**Behold, I have blessed him. . .and I will make him
a great nation (Genesis 17:20).**

Ishmael's posterity did certainly become a "great nation." Today the Arabs are actually several nations, and as we noticed in an earlier chapter, they have enriched the world in many ways culturally.

Now let us follow the story of these nations that sprang from these two men — Ishmael and Isaac. History records the enmity that arose between these two nations, and this has continued through all the centuries since. We would not give the impression that there is always hostility between these two groups, for in traveling through both Israel and other parts of the Middle East, we have noted with great interest and appreciation a great deal of friendliness between Arabs and Jews, especially within the confines of the land of Israel. The Arabs, under the government of Israel, enjoy the full privileges of citizenship; in fact a number of the Arabs are members of the Knesset, the Parliament of Israel. Some are even members of the Cabinet.

In the early days the first evangelists were preaching to both Arabs and Jews. And through the power of the gospel they all became one religion, fulfilling the purpose of God as expressed in Galatians 3:28:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free,
male nor female, we are all one.

Were the Apostle writing now, he could say, "There is neither Arab nor Jew." The believer, while recognizing national characteristics, does not and cannot recognize national separations. Members of all races are members of the true body and therefore part of the true "commonwealth of Israel" the commonwealth of the God-ruled, the true Israel of God.

The word Israel, as we have already noted, means God-ruled or "a prince with God." When Jacob surrendered to God on that fateful night when he wrestled with the Angel near the brook, Jabbok, his name was changed. That Angel, Jacob declared, was God. He had come to change Jacob, the deceiver, into Israel, the

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prince, the God-ruled man. The story is in Genesis 32:24-30. And the miracle is just as real today, for when the Spirit of God comes into our hearts He takes control, and our emotions with their hatred and suspicion are cast out.

This was illustrated while attending the important Jerusalem conference of Biblical prophecy in 1971. We listened with real interest to a wonderful testimony given by Mrs. John Van der Hoeven. She and her husband were caretakers of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. She was the only lady who spoke before that great assembled gathering in the National Convention Hall. Among other things, she said:

I am an Arab. I was born into a home where hatred of the Jews was a part of life. I knew nothing else. I grew up with that hatred in my heart. But when I became a Christian and found the saving grace of Jesus, my Saviour, I also found I could no longer hate the Jews. I was only a teenager at the time, but it has continued with me ever since. Today I love everybody.

If all the peoples of the Middle East, not only the Arabs but all others including the Jews, could find that same joy of salvation, how different that troubled area would be! And if all the peoples of the world would submit to the control of the Spirit of God, we would be living in a world where war and strife would be unknown. But the tragic fact is that, not only in the Middle East but in so many other parts of the world, the clouds of war have gathered threatening to plunge our generation into another World War.

In our effort to understand the threat that overhangs our civilization, let us face the facts that led up to the situation as we find it in Israel today. For those who would care to read up on this question, we would refer them to the *U.S. News & World Report* of June 11, 1948, p. 22. This sets out very clearly the events from 1917 to 1948 which was the year of the first Arab-Israel war (See Appendix). When Britain gave up the responsibility of

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governing Palestine in 1948, immediately the Jews proclaimed Israel as an independent state. And this was recognized by the leading countries of the world. At that time there were not more than about 650,000 Jewish men, women, and children in Israel. But they were surrounded by more than one hundred million in the Arab nations. When Palestine was partitioned between the Arabs and the Jews by the United Nations, the Arabs did not accept that partition and expressed their discontent in a very real way. Hostilities began under the title of "The War of Liberation," the purpose of which was to exterminate the Jews. But at the end of that war, Israel had actually gained about fifty percent more land than the United Nations, in the original plan, had allotted them. Moshe Brilliant, a journalist for the *New York Times*, in his book says:

It is interesting to note that at the time the Jews pleaded with the defeated Arabs to stay. People refuse to believe it today, but it's true. The Jews had not been a self-governing people for two millenia. They were conditioned to feel that their political status was in the hands of others. They were extremely sensitive to what the Christian world thought of them. . . . In April 1948 the Jews felt it important to impress on the world that the establishment of a Jewish State need not displace the Arabs.

When local Arab leaders met with Jews on April 22 to discuss surrender terms, they were promised full equality if they turned in their arms and military equipment. . . . Mayor Shabbetai Levy, and Oriental Jews with excellent personal relations with Arabs of the middle and upper classes, pleaded with them to remain and promised them full protection.

The Arabs asked for time to consider their reply. They communicated with their national leadership in Jerusalem and were told to clear out for the time being. They were advised they would be able to return [from the refugee camps] when

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the regular Arab armies swept in from neighboring countries immediately after the British withdrawal (Portrait of Israel, pp. 191-192).

Those refugee camps, the hot-bed of suffering and the birthplace of the Palestinian guerrillas, are still there after so many years! Many changes have occurred in Palestine during the last quarter of a century, but these camps have remained, a financial burden to the United Nations and especially the western world. Had the surrounding nations not chosen to go to war, the Jews would have been left with a very much smaller territory. This can be seen by a glance at the three maps on the following pages. The first is the way the country was planned by the United Nations. The second is the way the country appeared after the "War of Liberation." The third is the way it appeared after the "Six Day War". And the world well knows there was little peace between Israel and her neighbors from 1948 to 1956. That led to the Suez Crisis. Informed observers recognized that in 1956 a military campaign was imminent. Israel's defense was under the command of General Moshe Dayan. He startled the world by leading a 110-mile uninterrupted march toward the Suez Canal. The news media in New York told the story. George F. Sokolsky in his article in the *New York Journal American*, November 2, 1956, said:

It is obvious that it could not have been postponed because Nasser was organizing a military campaign against Israel, which could only have been defeated by Israel taking the offensive. The issue of aggression then resolves itself almost pathologically into the question of whether the patient is killed by a lethal weapon or is bled to death slowly. That is what happened to Israel which faced utter annihilation. . .

Then he tells how General Dayan moved forward in preparation for what he declares was "inevitable." The writer went on to say:

Had Nasser any kind of an army, he could have delayed or arrested that march [the 110-mile march].

Then Sokolsky asks:

Where were the airplanes, the tanks, the arms which the Russians gave him?

History now supplies the facts that while the enemy nations had all the armaments needed to crush their little neighbor, they nevertheless failed, and the Israelis gained another victory and captured a tremendous amount of armaments. In the settlement after this second Arab-Israeli war, it was agreed that Israel's shipping would not be hindered in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Strait of Tiran. But unfortunately there were almost continual violations of the agreement right up until June 1967.

Sensing that another war was in the making, Israel's neighbor countries joined together to defeat Israel. While we hesitate to state the facts, it is a matter of history, for documents reveal that a plan had been laid to not merely conquer the Israelis by taking war prisoners, but to slaughter every man, woman, and child taken. It is difficult to imagine such genocide in our time.

ISRAEL

As it is Today



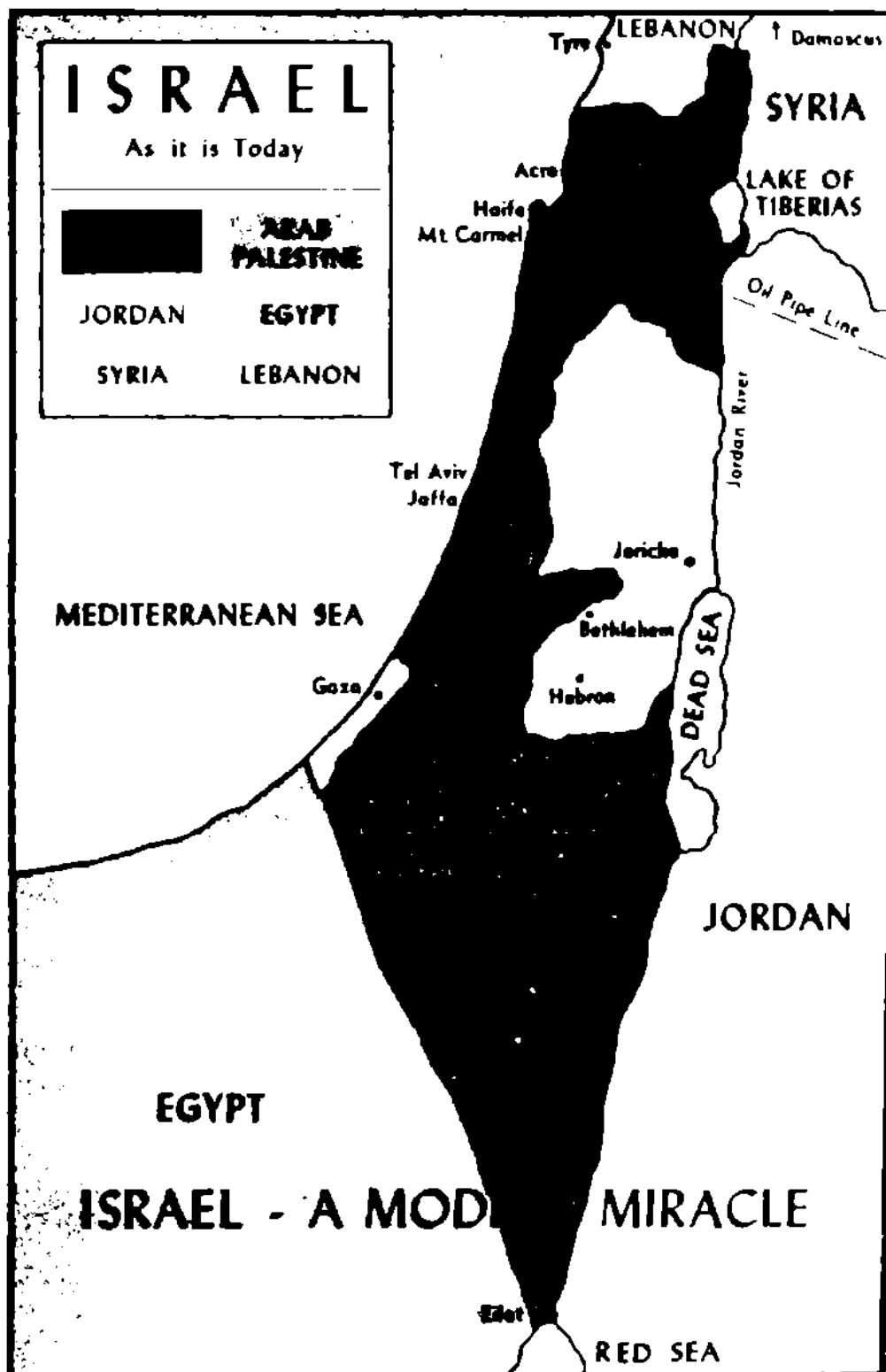
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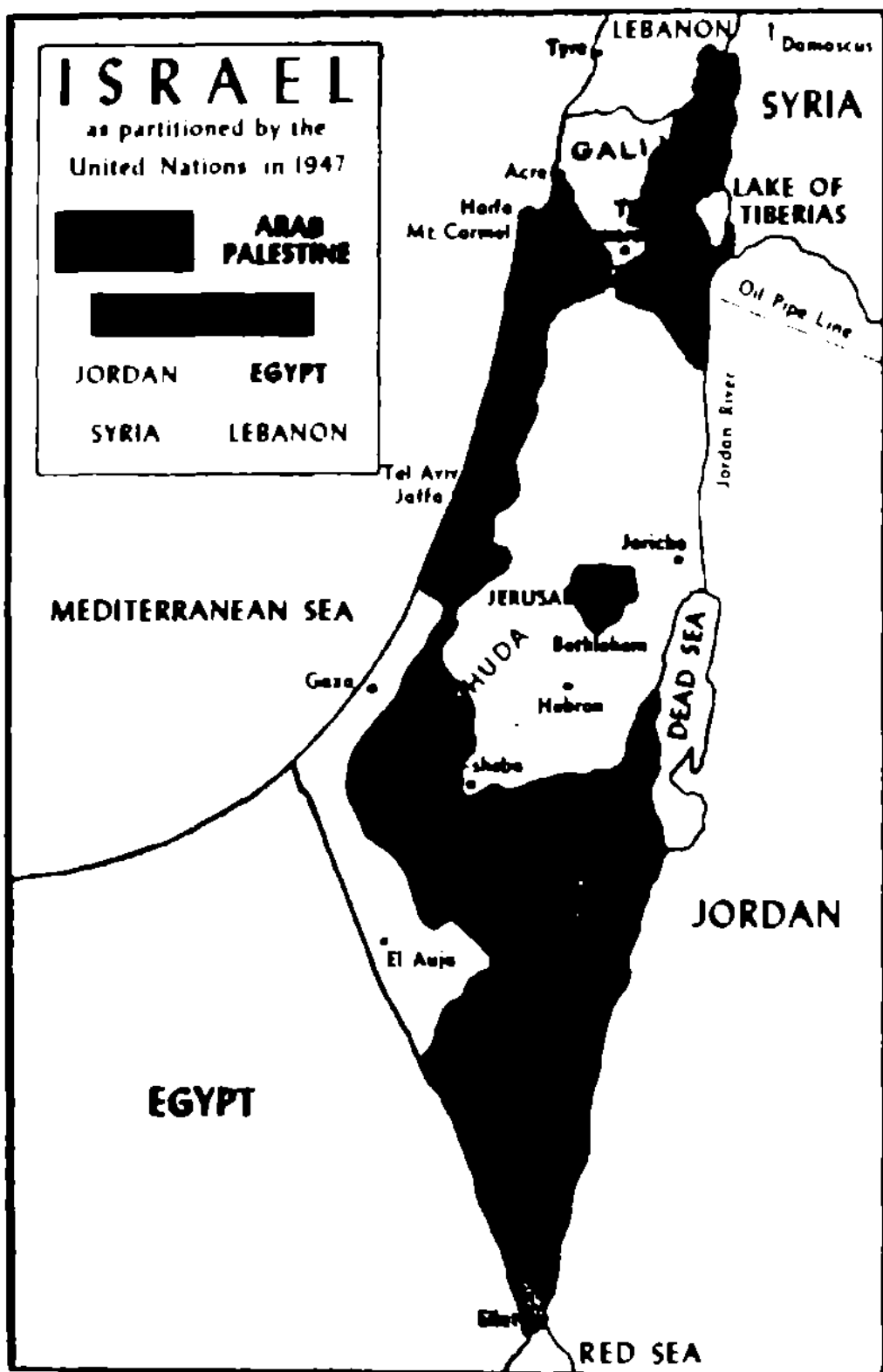
JORDAN

EGYPT

SYRIA

LEBANON





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The crisis came, as all the world knows, when the Strait of Tiran was closed and Israeli ships were not permitted to enter or leave, despite the fact that Israel had stated very clearly that such action would be regarded by the Israelis as an act of war. Viewing the massed troops that faced the Israelis, it appeared as though Israel would indeed be "driven into the sea." With only two and one-half million Jews and one hundred and ten million Arabs, the situation was wholly unequal. Israel was faced with either victory or annihilation. In that crisis hour General Moshe Dayan, their Defense Minister, declared that they were "prepared for any eventuality and did not need any help from outside." And such proved to be the case. In exactly six days the war was over and Israel gained more than four times as much territory as she originally held (see map).

The city of Jerusalem which had been so definitely divided with a strip of no-man's-land running right through the heart of the city came under the complete control of Israel. Today a united city, with freedom to travel the length and breadth of Israel, is guaranteed by the Israeli Government. What happened to the war planes, tanks, armaments, and modern equipment of the opposing forces? They were either captured or destroyed. Burned out war vehicles and weapons of war tell the story better than words. The statistics of what actually happened during those six terrible days will be found later in this volume.

Reviewing the events of this war, one naturally recalls certain passages in the Old Testament when it was clear that God went before Israel in their battles. Could it be that the God of ancient Israel is still interested in the Israel of today? Many believe that to be the case. Although they were opposed by nations equipped with the latest implements of war and billions of dollars worth of armaments, yet Israel emerged again victorious. That lightning war has been acclaimed as one of the greatest military campaigns of all history.

War is always tragic, but under certain circumstances it seems inevitable in this mixed-up world in

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which we live. To say that God had nothing to do with these fast-moving events in the land of Israel is to blind one's eyes to the facts. Ponder this wonderful prayer of the prophet Daniel:

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever:
for wisdom and might are his:

And he changeth the times and the seasons: he
removeth kings, and setteth up kings (Daniel
4:17).

And to King Nebuchadnezzar, the great dictator of his day, Daniel said:

The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and
giveth it to whomsoever he will (Ibid).

God has not abdicated. From His throne of glory He is still ruling the world and the universe. In spite of the terrible mistakes men make, God is always able to add the last chapter. The little nation of Israel could have been, and would have been, wiped out long ago had it not been for supernatural forces working for their preservation. The promises regarding the re-establishment of Israel in the "latter days" seems to be fast fulfilling. Could it be that the time has come, in the providence of God, for the outworking of some important movements in this little land? In 1914 there were only ninety thousand Jews living in Palestine. By 1935 there were three hundred thousand. Then by 1948 there were more than six hundred thousand. Today almost three million Israelis live in the land of Israel! The words of the prophet Jeremiah are worth pondering:

He who scattered Israel will gather him (Jeremiah
31:10).

The dispersion of the nation was a matter of both prophecy and history. Dare we say that the gathering and restoration of this nation is not also a matter of both

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prophecy and history? The prophet Isaiah says:

The Lord shall set his hand again the second time
to recover the remnant of his people.

or as the Revised Standard Version states:

Yet a second time to recover the remnant which is
left of his people. . . (Isaiah 11:11).

That "*second time*" recovery could not refer to their return from Babylonian captivity, which was their *first* recovery, but today an astonished world is witnessing a *second* recovery. This scripture has often been applied to the gathering of Spiritual Israel or the body of believers, and we do not oppose that, but the whole language of verses 10 to 16 indicates God is speaking of natural Israel and Judah.

Theodore H. White wrote in the *Life* magazine just after the Six-day War, when the Israelis moved in to occupy the old city of Jerusalem, having gained access to the sacred spot known as the Wailing Wall:

This country is still suspended between a nightmare and a dream. Legends have been born. Prophecy has come true. A flag of Zion floats over Jerusalem for the first time since the Romans leveled the Holy City nineteen hundred years ago.

Surely this is a time for thoughtful men and women to sit up and take notice. When hard-bitten journalists begin to talk about Bible prophecy coming true, it surely is time for the people of the living God to be awake.

The results of that campaign in 1967 were stupendous. In one week Israel's domain was increased from eight thousand square miles to thirty-four thousand square miles! Instead of this nation being driven into the sea, the opposing forces were pulverized in the desert. We need to have our eyes open to see what is happening and our minds alert to understand the meaning of the events of our day. Adolph Saphir reminds us that:

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Pharaoh tried to drown Israel, and they would not drown; Nebuchadnezzar tried to burn them, but they would not burn; Haman tried to hang them, but they would not hang.

The history of Israel is the history of miracle, even as it is **the miracle of history**.

On a slab of granite in Cairo are these words written by Rameses II three thousand years ago:

Israel is annihilated. Israel will have no posterity (Jews in the News, February 1949).

A German encyclopedia under Hitler says,

In less than 100 years the Jewish problem will be solved.

Today Rameses and Hitler are in their coffins. Israel is in the headlines of the press of the world (Ibid., cited in *The World Collision*).

In the face of such tremendous evidence, who would dare say these events are not important to the child of God? And who would dare deny that the glorious coming of the Messiah is "near, even at the door?" How sad that in the land which should be the land of peace there is bitter hostility. What is the future of the Middle East? Are these lands girding for earth's final conflict — the battle of Armageddon? Think it over and ponder these thoughts. The closing chapters in this book open up great prophetic vistas which will bring answers to many questions.

Chapter Fourteen

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

In modern history books there is a new date — June 5, 1967. It marks the day when forces moved in against Israel from many sides. It seems as though all the Middle East was determined to uproot what they called “the cancerous growth of Israel.” War resulted. The story of the Six-day War we have already recounted. But what happened seems all the more meaningful in the light of the prophecy about the “times of the Gentiles.”

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record this prophecy. It was given in answer to certain questions concerning the scattering of the nation, the destruction of the Temple, and the end of the world. We must exercise great care in this chapter lest we be found incorrectly dividing the Word of truth.

Near the close of that marvelous apocalyptic forecast, certain signs were enumerated by which we would be able to know when the end of the age was at hand. Here is one:

Learn a lesson from the fig-tree. When its tender shoots appear and are breaking into leaf, you will know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things, you may know that the end is near, at the very door (Matthew 24:32, 33, N.E.B.)

In the land of Israel, one of the few trees that loses its leaves is the fig tree. But when summer approaches the leaf buds become conspicuous. It might be called a

seasonal barometer. When the fig tree shows green the hot season is on its way.

For thousands of years in Palestine it has been regarded traditionally as a "herald of summer." This natural phenomenon was used as a parable. Many other things were mentioned as signs of the end of the age. One especially concerns the Jews in "the latter days." When we see the Jewish nation beginning to revive, we can be sure that the end of all things is at hand. In Joel 1:7 God calls Israel "my fig tree." And in Matthew 21:18, 19, we have the story of the cursing of a particular fig tree for it had no fruit. It became a symbol, therefore, of God's disapproval of Israel as a fruit-bearing nation. It was a sad day when His chosen nation was laid aside.

It has been well said that the cursing of the fig tree was *an acted parable*, for that tree, despite its lovely foliage, was nothing more than a pretense. Shortly after that the nation was scattered. But today the fig tree is breaking into new life; in other words, the nation is showing new growth, so we know that the "times of the Gentiles" are coming to an end.

Dr. A. Skevington Wood of Cliff College, England, and one of the prominent speakers at the vital Jerusalem conference on Biblical prophecy, notes in his book, *Signs of the Times*, that, "The Arabic root from which the Hebrew word for fig is derived actually means 'the time has come' or 'it is the time'." Many things are happening in the world which are definite signs of the coming end of the age. But in a specific sense, the happenings in Israel are among the most important. There is no mistaking the clear prophecy concerning the Jewish nation:

They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:24).

What does the expression "the times of the Gentiles" mean? The word Gentile is a translation from the Hebrew

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word "Goy" and simply means nation, any nation. "Goyim" (plural) means nations in general. When God said: "In Abraham all the nations of the earth would be blessed," He was speaking of nations irrespective of race or color. So the expression "the time of the Gentiles" could be translated "the times of the nations." During those "times," Jerusalem would be occupied by nations other than Israel. Actually "the times of the Gentiles" covers the Biblical concept of Gentile history when the human principle of government would be the distinguishing feature as contrasted with the divine principle. We do well to look carefully into that expression — "the times of the Gentiles" — for today there is much confusion on this question.

Prior to the invasion of the First Jewish Commonwealth by Babylon, the Judean kingdom was able to maintain itself as a sovereign state. But their overthrow by Nebuchadnezzar marked the beginning of a permanent change in the Jewish political situation in the world. To those people of Palestine the destruction of their Temple and their homeland, and more importantly their transplantation to Babylon, marked indeed the beginning of a new history for the Jews because from that time they were to be politically inferior. While a remnant returned under the decree of King Cyrus of Persia, the land of Judea was, as we have already noticed, no more than a Protectorate of the ruling Empires — Persia, Grecia, or Rome, and later, the Ottoman Empire.

The prophetic messages of Daniel, interlocked as they are with one another, outline Gentile history from Daniel's day until the close of "the times of the Gentiles" at the end of the age. The last Gentile world system will meet its doom when the God of heaven sets up His kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

Throughout the centuries and particularly during the last couple of hundred years, much has been written on these truths. Some of the best informed and most impressive writers on this subject published their books during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and they make fascinating reading today. Before there was even the

slightest indication that things would work out as they have, even while the Jews were scattered among the nations, outstanding scholars and students of God's Word went on record declaring that the Jews would someday return to the land of their fathers and would actually occupy the city of David.

The well-known Dr. Joseph Wolff, spoken of endearingly as "Missionary to the World," was one of the foremost of these writers and preachers. With great power he proclaimed the approaching end of the age. He constantly urged a closer study of the prophecies relating to the end of the world. A Jew by birth and the son of a Jewish Rabbi, he had a special desire to study. He was very young when he became convinced of the truth of the Messiah. He learned much by listening attentively to the conversations that took place in his father's home. Many times devout Hebrews would assemble in his father's living room to recount the hopes and aspirations of their scattered nation. They were looking for and praying for the coming of the Messiah and, of course, the restoration of Israel.

One day he heard the name of Jesus of Nazareth and inquired who he was. His father's answer was significant: "A Jew of the greatest talent, but as He pretended to be the Messiah, the Jewish tribunal sentenced Him to death." "But why is Jerusalem destroyed and why are we in captivity?" asked young Joseph. Again the reply was significant, "Alas! Alas! because the Jews murdered the prophets." Then young Joseph began to ponder, "Perhaps Jesus, Himself, was also a prophet. Perhaps our leaders misunderstood His mission." This feeling was strong and though forbidden to enter, he would often stand outside one of the churches and listen to the preaching from the sacred Scripture.

He was only seven years of age at the time, but he inquired of an old neighbor about the coming Messiah. The old gentleman replied quietly, "Dear boy, I will tell you who the real Messiah was: He was Jesus of Nazareth. Go home and read the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and you will be convinced . . ." (*Travels and Adventures of the*

The boy went home and read the Scripture and the Spirit of God opened to his mind its unsearchable riches. At the tender age of eleven, he left the home of his rabbi father, going out into the world to gain an education and to prepare himself for his life work. Not only was he stirred by the great truth of Him whom Isaiah wrote of as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but he saw also the great prophecies concerning the Messiah's return in power and majesty. He sought constantly to lead his own people to a knowledge of the coming of this Promised One. He spoke from the prophecies dealing with the coming Messiah in clouds of glory.

Believing that His coming was near, he preached frequently from Matthew, chapter twenty-four. Between the years 1821 and 1845 he traveled extensively, preaching in fourteen different countries. These great prophecies became his all-absorbing theme. He later visited Philadelphia and Baltimore preaching the great message with power. John Quincy Adams, former President of the United States, presented him to the assembled members of both houses of Congress. To these national leaders he opened up God's Word, presenting with conviction the great truths of Messiah's imminent return. He stressed also, the important part Israel would play in the closing events of earth's history.

The tremendous work accomplished by this dedicated Hebrew scholar and preacher moved other authors to emphasize what Wolff portrayed as a "Popular System of Interpreting or Misinterpreting" the Scriptures. It seems it was a prevalent practice in those days as it too often is today. Note these challenging words:

The greater part of the Christian church has swerved from the plain sense of the Scriptures, and have turned to the phantomizing system of the Buddhists, who believe that the future happiness of mankind will consist in moving about in the air, and suppose that when they are

reading Jews, they must understand Gentiles; and when they read Jerusalem they must understand the church; and if it is said earth, it means sky; and for the coming of the Lord they must understand the progress of the missionary societies; and going up the mountain of the Lord's house signifies a grand class-meeting of Methodists! (*Journal of the Reverend Joseph Wolff*, p. 96). [See *Great Controversy*, p. 360.]

Wolff carried the message of the coming Messiah to many nationalities. The Bible was his constant guide.

It is not sufficient to just study God's Word; we must guard against any tendency that would lead us to misinterpret Scripture. Many earnest Bible students are often unwittingly guilty of that when dealing with the great prophecies concerning Israel. Many years ago the popular author of the book *Captivity and Restoration of Israel*, now known as *Prophets and Kings*, stated this truth concerning Israel:

The story of Israel's call, of their successes and failures, of their restoration to divine favor, of their rejection of the Master of the vineyard, and of the carrying out of the plan of the ages by a godly remnant to whom are to be fulfilled all the covenant promises — this has been the theme of God's messengers of His church throughout the centuries that have passed; and today God's message to His church.

Note, this refers to the future. There has always been a "godly remnant" through whom He has worked.

In the apocalyptic discourse of Matthew 24, to which we have already referred, the fig tree was a symbol of the Jewish nation. In Luke's account of the same discourse, he mentions "all the trees" (Luke 24:29). Not only among the Jews but among all the nations of the world there are clear indications that the end is near, "even at the door."

The "times of the Gentiles," to which we referred earlier, is a period allotted to the nations just as that

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period prior to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem could be called the "times of the Jews." To understand the full import of that statement, it must be studied in the light of the prophet Daniel, Chapter 9. This is one of the most marvelous prophecies in all of God's Word. We do well to note carefully the details of this prophecy, for it brings us down from the days of Babylonian rule to the time when the Messiah would not only appear, but would be "cut off" from His people. After His death and resurrection He ascended to His Father to begin His ministry as our Intercessor at the throne of grace. Then the angel said to Daniel:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy (Daniel 9:24).

(Bible scholars recognize that a day in prophecy equals a year: 70 weeks would, therefore, be 490 years). Now here are *six* very important specifications. Verse 25 speaks of the coming of "the Messiah the Prince." Note these words:

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.

Had the religious leaders at the time of Messiah been really studying these prophecies, they would have known when the Messiah was to appear. More than that, they would have recognized that instead of driving the Romans out of Palestine, He Himself would "be cut off, but not for himself" (verse 26). Instead of ruling over His enemies, He was to become a sacrifice, not only for the

sins of Israel but for the sins of the whole world.

Every important detail of His life from His birth in Bethlehem to His crucifixion in Jerusalem had been outlined by the Hebrew prophets. When the wise men from the East, guided by the star, came to Jerusalem to inquire where the King of the Jews was born, Herod called together the religious leaders to inquire concerning the birthplace of the King. And those leaders told him very clearly it would be "in Bethlehem of Judea." They quoted the Scripture (Micah 5:2). And sure enough, that's where the Babe whom they were seeking was born. Then the record says "they worshipped Him."

Now why did not the religious leaders of that day follow the wise men and offer their homage to the King of Israel? We could ask many more such embarrassing questions, for throughout His life the Messiah was constantly fulfilling prophecies written hundreds of years earlier.

One of the most important of some three hundred of these prophecies was this one in Daniel 9 for it pinpointed the actual time when the Messiah would appear. It was stated in terms well-known and perfectly understood by students of prophecy of that day like John the Baptist.

As already noted, prophetic time must be reckoned in accordance with prophetic measurements which are clearly stated in Scripture. In Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34 a very important principle is laid down, in the clear statement "a day for a year." A prophetic day, then, is not an ordinary day of our time but an actual year. This principle was well understood in those days and has been understood by Bible students throughout all the centuries since. A prophetic week, then, would not be seven days but seven years. And seventy prophetic weeks would be seventy times seven or four hundred and ninety years. Now this was the period definitely allotted to the Jewish nation, or, as we have said, "the times of the Jews." It was given to the nation, not only to mark important events concerning the Jews themselves, but to particularly mark off the time and the work of the Messiah.

The big question is, when did this period of seventy

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prophetic weeks of four hundred and ninety years begin? Verse 25 states it clearly. The angel said to Daniel it would begin with a royal decree:

From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem (Daniel 9:25).

At the time this prophecy was given, Jerusalem was in ruins having been destroyed by the Babylonians. But Daniel was told that the Temple and the city would be rebuilt. And history confirms it, a fact we noted earlier. The first decree for the rebuilding of the *Temple* was issued by King Cyrus of Persia in 536 B.C. A later decree was issued by King Darius in 519 B.C. to complete the work of rebuilding the Temple, for the work had been delayed. Four years later the Temple was completed. (Figuring B.C. dates we always have to subtract. The scriptures state that the Temple was finished in 515 B.C.)

Although the Temple was rebuilt, the city of Jerusalem was still in ruins. Fifty-eight years later King Artaxerxes issued another decree for the rebuilding of the *city*. The decree of Cyrus is found in Ezra chapter 1; the second decree by Darius is found in chapter 6. This third and final decree by Artaxerxes, in chapter 7 and verses 11 to 26 was preserved in the Hebrew Bible in its original Aramaic language. It begins,

Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time.

And then follows the decree in which he charges Ezra, the priest, to go up to Jerusalem and take his people with him and begin the rebuilding of the city. In verse 26 we know how complete this was, for he gave Ezra authority, not only to build but to execute judgment, even to capital punishment. This decree gave the Jews, who had been captives in a foreign land, not only freedom but also national autonomy.

Twelve years later in 445 B.C. Nehemiah received a

permit from the same king to go up and assist in the building of the city. It is important to note that this was not a *decree*; it was a *royal permit* affecting just one man. The decree had already been issued twelve years earlier in 457 B.C. And we would emphasize again how important it is that we differentiate between Artaxerxes' decree in 457 B.C. and his personal permit later to Nehemiah in 445 B.C. The seventy weeks prophecy for the 490 year period really begins with the royal *decree* in 457 B.C. rather than Nehemiah's personal *permit* in 445. Daniel was told this period would be divided in three sections — "seven weeks," "three score and two weeks," and "one week."

The "seven" prophetic weeks period would be actually forty-nine years, and during this time the angel Gabriel told the prophet:

The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troubled times (Daniel 9:25).

This was fulfilled to the letter. By the year 408 B.C., 49 years later, according to Prideaux, the building program for the city was finished. The next period, the "three score and two weeks" (62 weeks or 434 years) would bring us to "the Messiah the Prince." Four hundred and thirty-four years from 408 B.C. would bring us to A.D. 26 or actually into the year A.D. 27 Matthew 3:13-17 in the record of His immersion we read,

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

The marginal reference in many Bibles gives the date clearly as A.D. 27 In Acts 10:38 we have the record of His anointing and subsequent ministry.

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed.

He was anointed with the Holy Spirit as He came

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up out of the water (Matthew 3:16). The word Messiah (HEBREW) means "anointed." In John 1:41 we read Andrew first findeth his own brother, Simon, and saith unto him: "We have found the Messiah." And the reference in the margin reads, "the Anointed."

Not until He was anointed with the Holy Spirit did He begin His great ministry which was to last exactly three and a half years. And Bible students agree that His great ministry was just three and a half years or one-half of the last remaining week of the seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel 9. Remember that these seventy prophetic weeks were divided into three periods — "seven weeks" or forty-nine years, and "sixty-two weeks," or four hundred and thirty-four years, (a total of 483 years or 69 prophetic weeks) and "one week" or seven years. And it was "in the midst" of that last prophetic week, or three and a half years after He began His ministry, that He was taken by Roman soldiers and crucified. That was A.D. 31. All of these dates are verified by reliable history. How marvelously accurate this prophecy is! Every feature was fulfilled exactly as the angel Gabriel stated.

When He began His ministry following his baptism or immersion, the Scripture says:

He came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. (Mark 1:14, 15).

Now to what "time" was He referring? and how was it fulfilled? The sixty-nine prophetic weeks or four hundred and eighty-three years from the going forth of the commandment to rebuild the city, down to "the Messiah the Prince" was fulfilled to the letter. And the last prophetic week or seven-year period began at the exact time the Messiah appeared. We already noticed He was anointed by the Holy Spirit and received power as a

Preacher, Teacher, and Healer. No re-interpretation of prophecy can change those tremendous facts. And true to the prophecy, He died in the middle of that last prophetic week. Even more impressive, He died on the day of the Passover, fulfilling the type exactly. Scripture says,

**For even Messiah is our Passover sacrificed for us
(1 Corinthians 5:7, H.N.B.).**

"For when we were without strength, in due time [‘according to the time’ margin] Messiah died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). Another translation reads: "*At the exact moment.*" That "moment" was at the time of the evening sacrifice when the lamb was being offered on the Passover Eve. At that time the Lamb of God gave His life for Jews and Gentiles and heathen alike. While men were blind to what was happening, God was reconciling the world unto Himself. Moreover, the very elements of nature responded, for we read:

There was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent in the midst.(Luke 23:44, 45).

In Daniel 9:27, the prophecy states:

He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.

Some interpreters apply this verse to a future anti Christ! This seems most unfortunate, for the pronoun "he" in verse 27 does not refer to the wicked prince who was to destroy the city and the sanctuary with war and desolation in A.D. 70 but to "the Messiah the Prince" who for three and a half years confirmed God's Everlasting Covenant. He confirmed it first by His teaching and preaching and at last ratified it by His death which brought to an end, or made of no effect, the whole

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sacrificial system of the Old Testament. By His vicarious death, He blotted out,

The handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Colossians 2:24).

As the Scripture clearly reveals, the elaborate sacrificial system of Israel was merely "a shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2:17). And that shadow had now met its substance. Type met anti-type; it was fulfilled. The Messiah's death in the midst of that last prophetic week changed, drastically changed, the whole concept of worship. Moreover it completely established Daniel's prophecy. That was the main thrust of the message of those early preachers, whom the Jewish leaders said had "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

So powerful were they in declaring the message that whole cities turned to God. Thousands were immersed in a day. Concerning the Anointed One whose sacrifice was for all, the Scripture says:

One who is anointed shall be removed with no one to take his part.(Daniel 9:26, N.E.B.).

How tragically true that was! No one took His part. Not even the disciples stood with Him in the judgment hall. He was condemned as an outcast and was crucified between thieves. His death, however, was not only for the sins of Israel but for the sins of the whole world.

While Jesus was a Jew by birth, He was also the Son of God. When Pilate asked the Jewish leaders, "Shall I crucify your king?" they shouted, "We have no king but Caesar." Little did they realize the full import of those words. In a few short years, they themselves were destroyed by the Caesar they chose.

Now note how exactly this prophecy was fulfilled which foretold the coming of the Roman prince Titus:

TIMES OF THE GENTILES
Destruction of Jerusalem Foretold

The clarity of this prophecy is amazing:

The prince [Titus] of the people [Rome] that shall come shall destroy the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary [Temple]: and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war [as a result] desolations are determined. . . and for the overspreading of abominations he [Titus] shall make it desolate, [70 A.D.] even until the consummation, and that determined [prophecy] shall be poured upon the desolate [Jerusalem].

At the critical time. . . the invading prince shall work havoc on city and sanctuary. The end of it shall be a deluge, inevitable war with all its horrors (Daniel 9:26, N.E.B.).

When those leaders turned from "the Prince of life" and pledged allegiance to "the prince of this world" they could never have imagined the tragedies that would result from their choice. Both Roman and Jewish history have filled in the awful details. Thirty-nine years after Messiah the Prince was crucified, the invading prince of Rome worked havoc on Jerusalem and the Temple.

As we noticed, the Messiah was "cut off" "in the midst of the week," the seventieth prophetic week. But there still remained three and a half years of that last prophetic week. It was A.D. 31 when He died, but the prophecy reached to A.D. 34. During those years from A.D. 31 to A.D. 34 the disciples preached the gospel of grace in Jerusalem. And so powerful was their appeal that many thousands turned to the Lord and were immersed. This alarmed the Jewish rulers and they summoned the Sanhedrin to deal with it. Stephen, one of the most gifted preachers and leaders of the early congregation, was called to answer for his faith.

SUMMARY OF PROPHECY

Seventy weeks of years or 490
years allotted to the Jewish na-
tion 490 years [Oct. 457 B.C. t
Daniel 9:24 Oct. 34 (A.D.)]

From the going forth of the de-
cree (457 B.C. Ezra 7:12, 13,
27) to restore and build Jerusalem
unto the Messiah shall be 69 weeks
of years or 483 years [Oct. 457 B.C. t
Daniel 9:25 Oct. 27 (A.D.)]

He shall confirm the covenant for
one week of years 7 years [Oct. 27 (A.D.
Daniel 9:27 to Oct. 34 (A.D.)]

Messiah cut off in the middle of
the 70th week of years and thus
the animal sacrifices would no
longer be necessary, because the
true Lamb of God was sacrificed 3½ years [Oct. 27 (A
Daniel 9:26, 27 D.) to April 31 (A.D.)]

OCT.
457
B.C.

OCT. APR. OCT.
27 31 34

**483 YEARS TO MESSIAH
(69 WEEKS)**

**7 YEARS
(ONE WEEK)**

TIME PROPHECY OF THE MESSIAH

**490 YEARS ALLOTTED JEWISH NATION
(70 WEEKS)**

Brought before that august body, his defense was so wonderful that it is one of the high points of the New Testament story. But at the conclusion of his impassioned presentation, those leaders were still adamantly defiant. This caused Stephen to charge them with resisting the Holy Spirit and rejecting the only One who could bring salvation to them and their nation.

In a fury of hate, those rulers "gnashed on him with their teeth and cast him out of the city" (Acts 7:54-60). Stephen was stoned and he became the first of a multitude of martyrs. That occurred in A.D. 34, exactly three and a half years after Messiah's death. Thus terminated the four hundred and ninety years allotted to the Jewish nation as "the times of the Jews." Phillip Mauro declares that, "There remained not one of the six items of Daniel that was not fully accomplished." In that same year, Saul of Tarsus, a member of the Sanhedrin and the one in charge of the execution of Stephen, was challenged by the living presence of the One he honestly believed was dead. In terror and amazement he asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" The answer was even more amazing — "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest!" From a persecutor he became a champion of the gospel ministry. Like his fellow ministers, he realized that the seventy week prophecy or 490 years allotted to the Jews was fulfilled exactly.

The accuracy of this prophecy doubtless had a tremendous influence on the Jewish people of that generation. However, in later centuries the Jews were discouraged from studying this portion of Daniel's prophecies as the following report indicates:

In 1656, a dispute occurred in Poland between some distinguished Jewish rabbis and the Catholics respecting the 70 weeks. The rabbis were so hard pushed by the argument that proved Jesus to be the Messiah, the time of his sufferings being at the end of the 70 weeks, that they broke up the discussion. The rabbis then held a meeting

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and pronounced a curse upon any Jew who should attempt to ascertain the chronology of the prophetic period. Their anathema was this: "May his bones and his memory rot who shall attempt to number the 70 weeks" (Unfolding the Revelation, pp. 101, 102).

More than a thousand years earlier, the writers of the Talmud — the authoritative body of Jewish law and tradition which was completed not later than the 5th century A.D. used similar language. In *Talmud Sanhedrin 97 b* we read: "Blasted be the homes of those who calculate the end." Note 6 shows "the end" to mean "The Messiah's Advent."

Another significant reference is found in *Talmud Megillah 3 a*. "The Targum of the Prophets was composed of Jon ben Uzziel. . . . He further sought to reveal the inner meaning of the Hagiographa (sacred writings) but a Bath Kol went forth and said Enough! What is the reason? Because the date of the Messiah is foretold in it" (Quoted in *Israel's Heritage*).

It is evident that the rabbis who wrote the Talmud knew the prophecy of Daniel concerning the Messiah.

In A.D. 70, thirty-six years after the martyrdom of Stephen, the prophecies about the land of Judah were tragically fulfilled. The Jewish-Roman war resulted in the overthrow of the Jewish nation, the people being driven from their homeland and scattered into all parts of the earth. How true were the words of such great prophets as Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Jesus! The land of Israel was completely occupied by enemies of the Jews. Since then until 1967 — the Six Day war, Jerusalem was indeed "trodden down by the Gentiles."

Years before the destruction of Jerusalem, two Jews, Paul and Barnabas, began a wonderful witnessing

program among pagan peoples. These men, being Jews by birth, naturally attended the Jewish synagogues on the Sabbath. When they came to Antioch, in Pisidia, they were invited to preach. As we have already noted Paul was a trained rabbi. So enthusiastic were the people about their messages that they begged that these men preach to them again the next Sabbath. The invitation probably came largely from Gentile believers. God was impressing people with the truths of their message. The Scripture says,

And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God (Acts 13:44).

One would naturally think that the Jews would have been thrilled to see Gentiles coming to listen to the Word of God. But instead,

They were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13: 45, 46).

With heavy hearts Paul and Barnabas rebuked those envious Jews. They could do that because they, too, were Jews. The continued resistance of their nation to the gospel forced these early preachers to turn to the Gentiles. In doing so they quoted from the prophet Isaiah declaring

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the promises of God who had raised up the nation to be the messengers of salvation to the world. God said:

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth (Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6).

On another occasion when Paul was preaching and testifying to the Jews concerning Jesus the Messiah, he met the same defiance. The Scripture declares that:

When they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles (Acts 18:6).

The eyes of so many of the Jews were blinded by the enemy of all righteousness that as a nation they failed to recognize the application of the very Scriptures they professed to believe. But those who did accept the message of salvation became wonderful witnesses to the truth of God. Again with a heavy heart, he said to the Jews:

Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it (Acts 28:28).

It was not that Paul wanted only Gentiles to hear the message, for when he wrote the epistle to the Romans he said he could wish himself accursed for his own brethren's sake (Romans 9:3). He longed for the Jews to accept the

saving gospel. But when the Jews, the chosen people of God, refused to accept the message of redemption through the Grace of God He then used Gentile believers as messengers to the world.

Despite political upheavals and the tragedy of war, however, Jewish-Christians and Gentile-Christians alike have been going "everywhere preaching God's message" (See Acts 8:4)

Three times we read that because of the Jew's attitude toward the Messiah, the gospel went to the Gentiles. That was more than nineteen centuries ago. Since then Jerusalem, the pride of the nation, has been occupied by Gentile nations and rulers. Prophecy has certainly been fulfilled: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." And history for nineteen centuries confirms it. However, Jerusalem is again controlled by Jews. Can we say then, that "the times of the Gentiles" have been fulfilled? This question surely deserves deep study. The Scriptures say that, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel." But then we read: "Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25), or "Only until the Gentiles have been admitted in full strength" (N.E.B.). Have we reached the time when God is beginning to remove this blindness from the eyes of His chosen people? Has the time come, as Ezekiel prophesied, for the hearts of stone to be turned into hearts of flesh? Are we about to see that before the Messiah's return in glory there will be a great revival among the Jews. Pentecost will be repeated and with even greater results than nineteen centuries ago. Bishop Arthur Coxe, in his great "Hymn for the Times," written over a hundred years ago, wrote:

We are living, we are dwelling in a grand and
 awful time,
 In an age on ages telling to be living is sublime.
 Hark! the waking up of nations, Gog and Magog
 to the fray;
 Hark! what soundeth? Is creation groaning for
 her latter day?

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Could the bishop behold the marvelous signs in the heavens and the earth today what would he write? No people since the days of Noah have had a greater opportunity of witnessing the fulfillment of prophecy than those of us who live in these "latter days." One of the Hebrew hymns reads:

Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad (Psalm 14:7).

This, of course, applied to the state of God's people in the past, but who would dare to say it does not have an application also in our day? Few things in all history have so stirred the hearts of both Jew and Gentile as what happened just seven days after the capture of old Jerusalem following the Six-day War. It was the time of the Feast of Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks. A mass pilgrimage took place with a stream of Israelis passing through the streets of King David's city under the national flag. They were marching to the sacred wall. Dr. Dwight L. Baker, Chairman of the Baptist Convention in Israel, gives this eyewitness report:

The procession, some two hundred thousand strong, started at 4:00 a.m. The nine mile journey was made by foot along a road that had been freshly asphalted since the take-over. The pilgrimage proper began at Mount Zion and entered by the Dung Gate to the Wailing Wall. Here prayer was offered and Psalms of Ascent were recited (Psalm 120 to 134).

The first verse of Psalm 126 reads,

When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

There are fifteen "Songs of Degrees" or "Psalms of Ascent." These were always sung when the ancient pilgrims, making their way to Jerusalem three times a year, came in sight of the Holy City. But for nearly two thousand years these Psalms could not be sung as they were written to be sung, because the nation was scattered and pilgrims were not able to return to the city year after year. But following the Six-day War Jews poured in from everywhere, eager to be present at the Wailing Wall. This was indeed a day to be remembered. The chronicler says,

Every section of the population was represented. Members of the Kibbutzim (collective farms) and soldiers wearing prayer shawls rubbed shoulders with the orthodox religious. Many notables were present including Leonard Bernstein, (conductor of the New York Symphony) and Danny Kaye, the comedian. Young mothers pushed their babies in prams beside old men who had to be helped along as they fulfilled a life-long dream of praying at the wall before the end of their days. Only a matter of hours before the Ascent began, bulldozers had demolished the slum dwellings which reached within a few feet of the Wall and opened up a huge square to accommodate the many pilgrims. The crowd moved on in one direction in an orderly manner and left through the Jaffe Gate for the new city (*Signs of the Times*, A. Skevington Wood, p. 22).

Never since the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 had the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashana) been "ushered in on the eve of Tishri by services in the synagogues in the old city." Many important passages of Scripture have been read through the centuries in connection with these great events. One such is Isaiah 52:10:

The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all. . .the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

These Scriptures had new meaning now.

In the face of such promises, it is natural that a new interest is being awakened in the hearts of these people for whom they were first written. The blindness of Israel has not been *entirely* removed from this nation, yet we can thank God for what is being accomplished. The Jews in many parts of the world seem to be awakened by the Holy Spirit to a new sense of their destiny. And while in the land of Israel at present there is, we fear, a great deal more concern for material possessions than spiritual needs, yet we can discern God's leading in many lives, impressing us that the time is right upon us when we will see a great stirring among these dear people, and outstanding Jews will be witnesses among their own folk. The Jews are to be a power to work for their fellow Jews and marvelous will be the result. At the turn of the century, Palestine was little more than a rock-strewn, desolate land — a tiny corner of the sprawling Ottoman Empire. But at the close of the first World War, the Ottoman Empire was no more, and almost all of the Middle East was divided into independent states.

World War I was the beginning of tremendous changes, not only in that area but all over the world. Even greater changes followed World War II, many of which definitely affected Israel. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 created a favorable opportunity for the realization of the hopes of Israel. When Britain pledged herself to provide a home for Jews in Palestine, that gave great hope to these people scattered all over the face of the earth.

When that global war started there seemed no possible chance that any power other than the Ottoman Empire could possibly assume the rulership of, or would be even interested in, Palestine. But undreamed-of

changes soon took place affecting not only Israel but also all her neighbor nations. Living in this little land with the Jews are many Arabs, and these are still a very important part of the population. Both the Israelis and the Arabs know they must find a settlement if peace is to reign there.

Jerusalem which for almost two milleniums has been "trodden down of the Gentiles," became an important Islamic center. But today it is the capital of the new nation of Israel. Mark Twain's description of the Palestine of the 1880's helps us to realize the changes in this land since his day. He said,

Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it spreads the spell of curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energy. . . . The sea of Galilee was long deserted by the devotees of war and commerce, and its borders are a silent wilderness; Capernaum is a shapeless ruin; Magdala is the home of beggared Arabs; Bethsaida and Chorazin have vanished from the earth, and the desert places around them. . . sleep in the hush of a solitude that is inhabited only by birds of prey and skulking foxes. Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise? (*Innocents Abroad*, p. 100).

If Mark Twain and the men of his generation could travel through this land today, they simply could not recognize it. With "the times of the Gentiles" reaching their end, we see a real program of restoration and expansion of the old city of Jerusalem. One is blind who fails to see that we are at the end of the age.

When some religious leaders came to Messiah demanding that He show them a sign from heaven to prove His credentials, He said,

When it is evening you say, "It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.

And in the morning, it will be stormy today: for the sky is red and threatening." You know how to

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interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times (Matthew 16:2, 3, N.E.B.).

The "signs of the times" were abundant at that time identifying Him as the Messiah. He fulfilled scores and scores of prophecies but the people of His day failed to interpret those prophecies. His first advent was clearly outlined in every detail, but sad to say, the majority failed to recognize Him. The same situation exists today. Great signs are happening everywhere; one of the greatest is Israel itself. Yet so few seem to recognize these as signs of the times. While we "do not know the day nor the hour," not even the year, we know it will be soon, very soon.

There are ten times as many signs pointing forward to His second advent as were seen at His first advent. The question is, what will happen when He returns? Some look for Him to begin His millennial reign in old Jerusalem. They expect a time of universal peace and prosperity. In anticipation of that, they are hoping the Jewish temple will be rebuilt on the ancient site now occupied by one of the shrines most sacred to the Moslems — the Dome of the Rock. And many teach that the ancient sacrificial services will be reinstated.

We ask what would be the purpose if this temple, called by some "Tribulation Temple," even if it were built and the sacrifices reinstituted? The whole Mosaic system of types, wonderful as they were, was only a "shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1). **THOSE SACRIFICES POINTED FORWARD TO THE COMING MESSIAH.** When the type met the Antitype it naturally passed away, having no further purpose.

Nowhere in the New Testament are we directed to the earthly temple, nor to an earthly priesthood. Our Great High Priest, having suffered for us, now carries out His ministry of intercession in the sanctuary in heaven of which the earthly sanctuary was the type. To Moses, God said, "See thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:5). "The true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not

man," is where we now direct our worship. So we ask again, even if some enthusiasts succeeded in rebuilding the Temple and the services were reinstated, what would be the purpose of it, seeing all has been fulfilled? Would that not express unbelief rather than faith?

The idea of rebuilding the temple is not new. Sixty-five years after the Romans had destroyed it in A.D. 70 and scattered the Jewish nation, Bar Kochba, in A.D. 135 organized a movement to re-establish the Jewish services. He began to rebuild the temple. But the Roman army overthrew the plan and quelled the insurrection. Then in A.D. 380 the Emperor Julian, who turned against Christianity, decided to rebuild the temple to prove the statement incorrect about the temple that there would "not be one stone left upon another" (Matthew 24:3). He even promised the Jews protection and wealth if they would help with the project. But a series of what they regarded as supernatural events led to the abandonment of the work. "Julian the Apostate," as he came to be known, was later fatally wounded on the battlefield. Sensing the approach of death, he cried out, "O Galilean, Thou hast conquered!" Later the Ottoman Empire took possession of the whole area, on which they erected two mosques. These still stand.

Ambitious men today seem eager to have the temple rebuilt. It is perhaps natural for the Jews to desire it, but for well-informed evangelical Christians who believe in the once-for-all sacrifice on the cross, the idea is, to say the least, strange. Actually it is a carry-over from the Counter Reformation of the sixteenth century. Let us digress a little and think of the great Protestant Reformation that so stirred Europe.

Outstanding leaders like Luther, Knox, Cranmer, Zwingli, and others were bringing light to the people from God's Word. They believed from their studies of both the Old and New Testament prophecies that there would be a tragic apostasy resulting in the setting up of the prophesied antichrist. This, of course, rocked the Christian world. So to meet the challenge, the Counter Reformation was launched. Growing out of this, a new

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system of prophetic interpretation was developed, due largely to the work of the Spanish Jesuit scholar, Francisco Ribera of Salamanca. He published his book about A.D. 1585.

Through clever but subtle misinterpretations of the prophecies concerning the Antichrist, minds were made to focus on some future person whom they said would appear at the end of time. Some followers later declared he would be a Jew of the tribe of Dan; maybe even a reincarnation of Judas Iscariot! They also predicted that this future Antichrist will make a covenant with the Jews but later will go back on his word and become their great persecutor. Then, after three and a half literal years, they claim he will be destroyed by the glorious appearing of the "Judge of all the earth."

These fantastic interpretations seem to handle the Scriptures more like a juggler than a serious student of God's Word. The whole system was categorically denied by every one of the Reformers, and for nearly 300 years it was buried. But around 1830, it began to be unearthed. Edward Irving of England and others added to this false teaching the idea that the second advent will be a secret event no one will know anything about until the saints are all gone! This is referred to as the "secret rapture." The Scriptures, of course, clearly reveal that the second advent rather than being secret will be a glorious, spectacular event, the like of which has never been seen before. Note the words of Scripture: "He will come in His own glory, and in the glory of the Father, and all the holy angels" (Luke 9:26). We also read that all the tribes of the earth shall see Him coming in clouds of heaven (Matthew 24:30). The Scripture says plainly, "Every eye shall see Him" (Revelation 1:7). And again, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first (1 Thess. 4:16). Nothing secret about that! "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (verse 17).

It is important to note that this is the only place in

Scripture that speaks of the saints being "caught up" or "raptured." But the trump of God and the Archangel's voice are all part of the picture. Rather than teaching a *secret rapture*, the Scriptures speak of a *glorious rapture*.

It is the Messiah Himself who comes, but not until He finishes His marvelous mediatorial ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

There are two whole books in the Bible that deal with sacrificial worship. One is Leviticus in the Old Testament; the other is the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament. Leviticus sets forth the typical services of worship in the earthly sanctuary with its animal sacrifices, but the Hebrew Epistle emphasizes the antitypical, showing that today our worship is directed toward the heavenly sanctuary where our High Priest officiates at the throne of grace. His finished work on earth, His death at Calvary, brought to an end all sacrificial services. So we ask what virtue could there possibly be in the re-establishment of the ancient services in an earthly temple?

Well could Messiah say to the religious leaders of His day, "Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." "Can ye not discern the signs of the times?" And He could say the same to many deeply religious people of our day, many of whom are leaders.

What is happening in Israel is one of the greatest signs of the Messiah's imminent advent in glory. In no way does it forecast the re-establishment of a sacrificial system in Jerusalem, something which has been completely fulfilled and has long since passed away. Old Testament services, impressive as they were, have now emerged into the High Priestly ministry of the New Covenant in heaven. There, the Lamb of God, who has taken away the sin of the world, is our Intercessor. He takes away not merely the sins of Israel but the sins of all who come to Him in faith. And He is about to finish His intercessory ministry as our High Priest and come for His people as the King of glory. He is the Saviour, not of just one nation but "the Saviour of the world," of all men everywhere. When He concludes His ministry He will come with all the holy angels, descending in glory to

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receive all true Israelites and bring them home to His Father's house. When the angels have reaped the "harvest of the earth," "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matthew 13:43) Think of being with God's redeemed people in the Father's house! And the good news is that unmistakable signs of that glorious event are everywhere today.

In chapter two we dealt with the distressing oil crisis which some speak of as a "swindle," claiming this was deliberately planned and carried through. "America is now running out of oil, far from it," declare certain well-informed sources. Don Oakley, of the *Copely News Service*, for example, says that for each one of the billions of barrels of oil taken from the ground of the U.S.A. since 1859 when it first began to be used, another barrel remains within the ground. And John Knight of the *Knight Newspapers* declares that a conservative figure of U. S. oil resources would be 100 billion barrels. Some declare the figure is much higher and all this exclusive of shale oil.

The *U.S. News and World Report* issue of November 22, 1971, contained a statement concerning our total offshore oil reserves, claiming it would reach 780 billion barrels. And this did not take into account the estimated 20 billion barrels of Alaskan oil. One thing seems certain — we are not down to our last gallon of Exxon yet! Offshore drilling always carries with it, of course, the risk of an oil-spill such as happened at Santa Barbara in 1969. Much was made of that by the news media; some say greatly exaggerated. What the public was not told was that of the almost 14,000 offshore wells that have been drilled only three have had serious spills; yes, that is right, only three! Granted they were three too many. But an unfortunate executive order went out to refuse any further requests for drilling. This resulted in a regrettable slow down of American oil, making necessary larger imports of Arab oil. Then the five year's inevitable delay in the construction of the Alaskan pipeline prevented the flow of one million barrels of oil a day which is about the

amount the U.S. has been importing from the Middle East!

The energy crisis, however, includes more than oil, for suddenly we began to hear of growing shortages of natural gas. Strange that restrictions on oil should be followed so quickly by an alarm about gas shortages. Strange until one realizes that these alarms may well be part of an all-out program to bring about a *One-World Government* which prophecy indicates will be attempted before the end of human history.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, August 27, 1975, we read: "Americans will have to eat less, switch from cars to bicycles and adopt other belt-tightening measures in the next decade because the energy shortage is here to stay, according to a paper published by the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies." In the news media former President Ford, in his speech at the World Energy Conference in Detroit, September, 1975, was reported as calling on all citizens to help build a "global energy strategy" that would end in "Interdependence." This he urged as essential. But note the word "Interdependence" instead of independence — our usual word.

A recent editorial in *Fortune Magazine* stated that in November, 1975, "Japan chose to abstain from the U.N. vote declaring Zionism a form of racism, rather than risk offending the Arabs. . . If the Arabs were to unlimber their oil weapon against countries supporting Israel, we could be left with the option of either giving in or taking military action." As for the development of alternative energy sources, such as coal and nuclear power, the outlook is, if anything, worse than it was in 1974. All these things happening together are significant.

We mention these facts to enable the reader to understand that powerful influences are at work in our world today, conspiring to oppose God's divine purpose for our generation. The oil crisis could be one of the evidences of this anti-God movement. But despite all that the powers of evil can do, the God of heaven is still in control of our world and nothing can happen except by

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His divine permission. The following chapters of the volume unfold not only God's purpose for Israel but for the whole world. As authors we sense a divine responsibility to make clear what is revealed in God's word.

Chapter Fifteen

THE ELECTION OF ISRAEL

The election of Israel is another inspiring theme which unfortunately is misunderstood by many. Some have hastily concluded that while it was God's purpose at one time to bless the world through Abraham's literal seed, yet that is not the case today; for, they say, God has no further interest in this people. But is that a sound position?

Terrible as was that act by the Sanhedrin, it never hindered the individual's accepting salvation. In fact, believers by thousands and many thousands came to see that the One the leaders rejected was indeed the Messiah. Wonderful indeed were the examples of God's power to open the eyes of individuals and lead them to a clear understanding of such messages as the suffering servant in Isaiah, chapter 53.

Believers came together right there in Jerusalem when three thousand Jews, in one day, were led to repentance and were immersed. The first seven chapters of the book of Acts make fascinating reading as we see God's working in mighty power upon the Jewish people. The last verse of chapter two in the *New English Bible* reads:

And day by day the Lord added to their number
those whom he was saving.

In the next chapter we are informed that "Many of them which heard the Word believed; and the number of the

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men was about five thousand." The three thousand "souls" mentioned in chapter two included both men and women. But the "five thousand" were evidently *men* only. The total number of believers must have been at least ten thousand. Then we learn that:

Believers were the more added to the Lord,
multitudes both of men and women (Acts 5:14).

That is the last statistical report we have concerning the actual number of believers. They were so numerous, the leaders were evidently unable to keep a real account of their numbers. Whole towns and cities turned to God under the preaching of those first evangelists. The book of Acts is indeed, inspiring history.

The rapidity with which believers grew in Jerusalem and throughout Judea was so wonderful it seemed like they were quite content to stay in that area. But they were commissioned to preach the gospel, not only in Jerusalem and Judea but also in Samaria and then to "the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Those who preached the gospel and those who accepted it during the first few years were practically all Jews by birth. The message of God's saving grace had not as yet penetrated the Gentile world. A change had to come for it was God's purpose that people everywhere should hear and have the opportunity of accepting salvation. It was Peter, the apostle to the Jews, who first proclaimed the gospel to the Gentiles. When he came to the home of Cornelius, the Italian Centurion in Caesarea, he little anticipated the result of that visit. We read,

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all of them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed [Jewish believers] which accompanied him, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God (Acts 10:44-46).

speak with tongues and magnify God (Acts 10:44-46).

This was the first break-through into the Gentile world. The previous chapter in the book of Acts records the tremendous experience of Saul of Tarsus who became the great preacher to the Gentiles. But before he began his great work, the Holy Spirit had already led the way through the preaching of Peter. His first epistle was addressed,

To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.(I Peter 1:1)

These "strangers" must have been Gentile believers. But note how he addresses them. He speaks of their being "chosen of old in the purpose of God the Father" (I Peter 1:1,2). Evidently it was in the purpose of God from of old to have people of many nations to be His witnesses. Through the prophet Isaiah, God said: "My house shall be called an house of prayer for all people" (Isaiah 56:7).

While Peter spoke of them as "strangers" yet he also called them "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar [or purchased] people." Their election must surely have been supernatural. Their setting apart was by the power of the Holy Spirit. Quoting from the writings of Moses to ancient Israel, Peter said:

Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth (Deuteronomy 14:2).

When God called ancient Israel and organized them into a nation it was His purpose that they should carry the light of Salvation to the whole world. In Isaiah 42: 1, God says:

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit

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upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Or "carry true religion to the nations" as Moffatt's translation reads. That was God's original purpose for Israel. Had they accepted their Messiah and moved forward under the divine commission, the entire world today would be different. Instead of accepting Him, they rejected Him. So God turned to the Gentiles. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter charged those Jewish leaders with a rejecting act, saying,

Ye denied the Holy One. . .and killed the Prince of life.

Yet while making that charge, he hastens to say:

And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it (Acts 3:14, 15, 17).

And Paul emphasizes the same thing, saying:

For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (I Corinthians 2:8).

True, they did not know, but these leaders should have known. They were blind, but there was no excuse for their blindness. In the words of Isaiah the prophet, they had closed their eyes and their ears so that they might not see or hear. Originally they were an elect nation, set apart to do a special work, but they failed to carry out their commission. They were elected for a sacred task, but history records the nation's failure. When we today choose or elect someone to an office, such as mayor of a city or a member of Congress, we expect them to prove faithful. And Israel had been chosen and elected not by popular vote, but by God Himself. Of Israel, the Lord said:

This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise (Isaiah 43:21).

Nothing so clearly reveals the wonderful love of our God as His patient dealings with Israel. In this we have evidence of both the "goodness and severity of God" as we read in Romans 11:22. In the days of King Solomon the nation was a wonderful example of prosperity under the blessing of God. But they failed and instead of being a demonstration of what a nation can be under the blessing of God they are a pathetic picture on the landscape of history.

God formed the nation Israel to be a theocracy, that is a God-ruled people. And the nation would have remained that way to this day had the Jewish leaders followed the pattern laid down for them by the God of heaven.

A thousand years earlier, the nation's leaders had demanded a king that they might be like the other nations around them. Their request displeased Samuel. He sensed this was a turning point in their history. So he prayed to the Lord for guidance. Here is God's answer:

Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them (1 Samuel 8:7).

They wanted a king who would judge them and go out before them and fight their battles (verse 20). It was a tragic mistake. When Israel turned from a theocracy to a monarchy, from being God-ruled to man-controlled, she took a bad step. But God did not throw aside the nation even when they rejected Him as their King. He still worked with and through them. Nor did He reject them completely even after their leaders had refused the counsel and rejected the only One who could have saved the nation. God's great miracle of grace is that in spite of all their tragic history, Israel is still fulfilling Bible prophecy. But as we already noticed, God had to use others as the messengers of the gospel to the world. But

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now, "The time has come when the Jews are to be given light."

During their wanderings to and fro throughout the earth, much of the light that God gave to them has grown dim. And one of the sad things is that those who should have been praying for these people, turned at times to become their bitterest persecutors. That is one of the darkest chapters in all history. Jew-baiting was not just the passion of a godless philosophy, as in the days of Hitler, but to some extent, it has been the pastime of the centuries for many people. How definitely the words of Moses have been fulfilled:

The LORD shall scatter thee among all people,
from the one end of the earth even unto the other

...

Among these nations thou shalt find no ease,
neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the
LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and
failing eyes, and sorrow of mind:

And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee;
and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have
none assurance of thy life:

In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it
were even! And at even thou shalt say, Would
God it were morning! For the fear of thine heart
wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of
thine eyes which thou shalt see (Deuteronomy
28:64-67).

None of that need have been, for the Lord laid down
definite principles to govern them.

If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of
the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all of his
commandments. . . the LORD thy God will set
thee on high above all the nations of the earth:
And all these blessings shall come on thee.

Then Moses enumerates the blessings. Furthermore, he
said:

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The LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath (Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 13).

The Lord planned a great program for Israel when they were elected. And it is interesting to remember that they were the only people that ever were elected by God to anything. It was the choice of the Almighty. When He called Abraham out of the Ur of the Chaldees, He said:

I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 12:2, 3).

The same promise was reiterated to Isaac, Abraham's son, the second in the line of the covenant nation. God said:

I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham, thy father;

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed (Genesis 26:3, 4).

And the promise was handed on to Isaac's son, Jacob:

I am the LORD of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. . .

And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 28:13, 14).

We read of Jacob's name being changed to Israel (See II Kings 17:34) When did that happen? It was on that night when Jacob, fearing his brother Esau was coming to

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destroy him, went out under cover of darkness to be alone. And, "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day" (Genesis 32:24). It is important that we get this picture as it really is. It does not say that Jacob wrestled with the man but rather "the man wrestled with Jacob." And the next verse says,

When he[the man] saw that he prevailed not against him[Jacob] he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

And he [the man] said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he [Jacob] said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

Who was that Man that wrestled with him? Jacob did not know until a supernatural power dislocated his hip. Then the patriarch realized that this was no ordinary man with whom he wrestled, and he was determined not to let him go until he had been blessed. God answered his request. He blessed him by changing both his name and his nature. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men" (Genesis 32:28). Before Jacob left that place he called it Peniel, which means "the face of God." And he said,

I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved (verse 30).

It is important to note that the wrestling began on the side of God, not the side of Jacob. God came to this man for one purpose. He wanted to change him from a self-satisfied, cunning deceiver to a worthy son of God. When the wrestling Man asked the patriarch his name he said, "Jacob," which means heel-catcher (Genesis 25:26). No longer was he to be Jacob but Israel which means a God-ruled man, and his posterity were no longer to be called the children of Jacob but the children of Israel — a God-ruled people.

Long years after they had been delivered from

Egyptian slavery, the Lord's message to Moses was:

Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord . . . and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:

And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God. . .

And I will bring you unto the land, concerning the which I did swear it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage (Exodus 6:6-8).

»

Jacob's posterity were now called not "the sons of Jacob," but "the children of Israel." And God said, "I will give you the land for an heritage."

There is a principle in law that anything that is inherited cannot be taken away and given to anybody else. The land of Israel was the heritage of God to the people of Israel. It was given them by God even before Abraham had any posterity. There is no record of such a gift to any other people.

Great gifts, however, also bring great responsibilities. God placed this people in a very strategic position geographically. All the caravans from the north, coming down to Africa, passed through that little land. The caravans from Africa, going north and east into India, all passed through that same little land. This became, to some extent, the meeting place of the roads of the world. God purposed that this land and this people should continue to be a wonderful testimony to the blessings of God upon those who obeyed Him. To these passers-by, the tourists, the workmen, and the businessmen, was given the opportunity for Israel to talk of God and of His grace. Then these, in turn, would carry the message to the ends of the earth. Here is God's command to Israel.:

Thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.

This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise (Isaiah 43:1, 21).

How much is summed up in these expressions! God speaks of them as "chosen," "created," "formed," and "redeemed." "Thou art mine," said the Lord. He called them and commanded that they should "show forth my praise."

True, the nation failed, but it would seem God has not thrown them aside. In spite of their failure, and although they have been wandering around the world for nearly two thousand years, God has been watching over them. He preserved them as a nation in spite of the fact they were without a homeland. But in these "latter days" the way is opening for them to return to the land of their fathers. Their coming back has great possibilities spiritually, for it makes it possible for them to be reached with a new revelation of God's goodness and saving grace. This could be accomplished much better if much of the nation is gathered in one land than if they remained scattered around the world.

While attending the international conference on Biblical prophecy held in Jerusalem, we listened with particular interest to the presentation of Dr. R. J. Ziv Werblowsky, a member of the faculty of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. As co-chairman of the Department of Comparative Religions, he was addressing the conference as an Israeli. Among other things, he said, "We as a people feel we belong to this land." He did not say that "this land belongs to us." He then emphasized that, "There is a kind of sacred wedlock between this people and this land." He reminded us that when God called Abraham, He promised him the land when, as yet, he had no child. Then quoting from Leviticus 26:42-45, the doctor read the words of God to Abraham:

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Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. . . .

When they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly. . .

But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors.

"So this land has a relationship to Israel different from any other people," he said. Then, to emphasize his point, he said, "When any one of our people dies anywhere in the world, we endeavor to have a handful of dust from this land to throw into the grave as a token of that one's identity with the land of Israel. Yes, we always knew we would come back, and here we are. And we are trying to recognize our responsibility to our neighbors, the Arabs. They, too, have legitimate rights. Furthermore, we realize that we have plunged the world into one of the most critical situations of all times. The prophets have told us not only where our roots are, but they have stressed that 'a man can be moral in an immoral society.' " After re-emphasizing that God's blessing on Israel is in evidence today, he concluded his presentation by quoting this well-known Scripture:

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts (Zech. 4:6).

What this Israeli professor said harmonized exactly with the statement we referred to earlier:

For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29 N.E.B.)

While literal Israel was laid aside, yet it would appear not cast away forever. One who believes the Word of the living God feels no surprise whatever, that a nation

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originated and developed under such unusual, even miraculous circumstances and preserved for nearly two thousand years, in spite of the most determined decrees of dictators, should have its preservation guaranteed. In Psalm 106:4-6, we read,

Remember me, O LORD, with the favor that thou bearest unto **thy people**: O visit me with thy salvation;

That I may see the good of **thy chosen**, that I may rejoice in the gladness of **thy nation**, that I may glory with **thine inheritance**.

Note these phrases: "thy people. . .thy chosen. . .thy nation. . .thine inheritance." This nation was elected and given a very definite inheritance. Remembering that statement that the "gifts and calling of God are without repentance" or are "irrevocable," it is not surprising that the Israelis feel that the land is still theirs, even though others have occupied it these many years or centuries.

While many have gone back in unbelief, just as God said they would, yet the Word of God is very clear that a change will take place. Instead of "hearts of stone," God promises to give those who turn to Him, "hearts of flesh." And God's word declares this will happen in the "latter days." We might well be witnessing the beginning of God's great purpose for this people. The Holy Spirit, who is pledged to guide us into all truth, will prepare all who are sincere in heart for that wonderful day when that great Hebrew hymn will be fulfilled:

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence:
a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very
tempestuous round about him.

He shall call to the heavens from above, and to
the earth, that he may judge his people.

Gather my saints together unto me; those that
have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

And the heavens shall declare his
righteousness: for God is judge himself (Psalm
50:3-6).

God's descent upon Mount Sinai at the time He spoke the great precepts of His law was accompanied by "thunders and lightnings. . .and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people. . .trembled (Exodus 19:16). Even, "Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" (Hebrews 12:21). But a far greater manifestation of divine power is soon to be witnessed. A modern translation paints the picture with vivid phrases:

Our God is coming and will not keep silence.
Consuming fire runs before him and wreathes
him closely round. He summons heaven on high
and earth to the judgment of his people; Gather to
me my loyal servants, all who by sacrifice have
made a covenant with me. The heavens shall
proclaim his justice for God himself is the judge
(Psalms 50:3-6, N.E.B.).

This is the prophetic picture of the coming of the Messiah in glory. Each of us must be ready for that greatest of all events.

Chapter Sixteen

SPIRITUAL ISRAEL:

DEFINED BY A BRILLIANT RABBI

In the early days of our common era leaders of both Jews and Christians faced a very real problem. The first Christians were all Jews by birth, but having passed through a profound experience under the power of the Holy Spirit, they were now fulfilled Jews. It was this experience that was opened up to Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin. This well-trained Jewish leader was dumbfounded when he was told that he "must be born again." And, "Unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." What a startling revelation to one who was a member of the highest Jewish court and "a ruler in Israel!" But this had nothing to do with social position or academic attainment, but about real fulfillment under the power and influence of God's mighty Spirit. Sensing the challenge of these words, Nicodemus, in stunned concern, simply asked: "How can these things be?" The comment on his query was just as startling: "Art thou a ruler in Israel and knowest not these things?"

Another member of the Sanhedrin, on his way to Damascus to carry out the orders of this high court, came face to face with an experience that changed his whole life. Acting under orders, he had come from the headquarters in Jerusalem with one avowed objective — to exterminate the Jewish Christians in that ancient city just as he had done in other places. But as he was about to enter the city, he was challenged by God, whom he professed to serve. He saw a blinding light and heard a voice of divine

command saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Falling to the ground in the presence of that Revelation, Saul tremblingly asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" (This is recorded in Acts chapter 9.)

The experience of Saul of Tarsus is one of the outstanding events recorded in the Bible. No Bible writer deals more explicitly with the question of Israel than does this man who once was fanatically engaged in the persecution of Jewish Christians. Having been brought face to face with One he believed to be dead, he later became one of the greatest exponents of the message of salvation. His writings on this subject have influenced religious thinking more than many other Bible writers. What he did and what he wrote had particular meaning for he was living and preaching only a few years after Pilate, the Roman governor, had ordered the crucifixion of Jesus.

In his letter to the Galatians, he made some very forthright statements. These new believers were being disturbed by certain Jewish teachers who did not fully understand his message. They declared that all believers must keep the ancient laws of Moses. The time had come for a real showdown on this question and Paul, a trained and brilliant rabbi, was used of God to set the record straight.

Circumcision is nothing; uncircumcision is nothing; the only thing that counts is a new creation (Galatians 6:15, NEB).

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16).

There is no equivocation here. He simply declares that converted Gentiles become part of the "Israel of God" after having entered into the experience of rebirth by the power of God.

There have always been, and are today, two types of

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Israelites. One group are Israelites in the flesh, the other are Israelites in the spirit; one the natural born Jew, the other the spiritually reborn Israelite. Only God-ruled men and women are true "Israelites." As noted in the opening chapter, Israel was the name given to Jacob after he wrestled with the Angel. Jacob means "heel-snatcher" or "supplanter," and such he was until that night at the brook Jabbok when the Angel (God Himself) crippled him in order to crown him. That night he learned an eternal lesson, the lesson all true Israelites have to learn that of complete surrender to God.

Paul goes even more deeply into this question in his letter to the believers of Rome. He illustrates his point by likening Israel to a tree that in some way becomes degenerate, and because the fruit on some of the branches is no longer holy, those branches are broken off. He likens Gentiles to branches taken from another tree, "a wild olive tree." Then he pictures God as a horticulturist who develops fruit-bearing trees by the process of grafting. He shows how God can take even wild branches and engraft them into the true tree at which time they become part of the original tree.

This spiritual miracle was not an original illustration. In John 15:5 the great Teacher said to His disciples, "I am the vine and ye are the branches." Only as we are a part of the true vine can we bear the fruit of the Spirit. Now let us note Paul's illustration more carefully. He speaks of grafting and then uses the expression "contrary to nature." Every horticulturist knows engrafted branches are expected to bring forth the fruit of that particular graft.

In our garden in California a number of years ago we had a citrus tree which bore oranges and lemons and grapefruit, all on the same tree! That was in harmony with nature for the grafts had been well done. But Paul speaks of engrafting of Gentiles into the Israelite tree as something contrary to nature. Occasionally engrafted branches, instead of bearing the fruit of the graft, bear the fruit of the original root and trunk. They call this a "bastard growth," for it is "contrary to nature." In

spiritual things this new growth must occur if we are to become true Israelites or members of God's "Spiritual Israel." It was easy for the people of Paul's day to understand this illustration for they lived much closer to the soil than we in this industrial age.

Now let us study what this great writer further says. He is talking not so much of the Jewish nation, who were Jews by birth, but to Gentiles who were non-Jews by birth. He says, "because of unbelief, they [that is the natural Jews] were broken off." Because as a nation they were no longer bringing forth fruit of the Spirit, God dealt with them and, as the great Horticulturist, He severed them from the tree. In their place He inserted new branches from the "wild olive tree." And it would be a tragedy if these engrafted branches should bring forth "wild fruit" — the fruit of an unchanged life. They must partake of the root and fatness of the good tree to be acceptable to God. But to do that was "contrary to nature," for Gentile believers, like Jewish believers, must bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. We repeat, had these engrafted branches brought forth fruit of the old life it would be tragic. Moreover, they (the new branches) must not in their pride boast themselves against the old branches, for if the natural branches, that is the natural Jews by birth "abide not still in unbelief they shall be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again." And He did, by the thousands.

It is also well to note very carefully that not all of the branches were broken off, only "some" of them. The tree then is made up of both Jews and Gentiles but all spirit-born believers. Only by the grace of God can we as Jews and Gentiles become partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree. So to those Roman believers he writes:

Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.

Then summing up the argument he says:

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Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off (verse 21).

In verse 25 this great rabbi says:

I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (Romans 11:25).

This last expression speaks of a "mystery." We shall notice that more definitely later. When Gentiles are grafted into the Israel tree, they, with their Jewish brothers, become spiritual Israelites. And as long as they stand by faith they remain spiritual Israelites. Moreover, the fulfilled Jew stands in exactly the same relationship. He, too, must stand by faith.

It is abundantly clear that the Scriptures speak of two types of Israelites. The Gentiles cannot become spiritual Israelites unless they partake of the root and fatness of the good olive tree. And the Jews, in order to be true children of Abraham, must also partake of the same root and sap of the tree. In this connection he quotes the prophet Hosea:

It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God (Hosea 1:10).

And again,

I will say to them which were not my people. Thou art my people (Hosea 2:23).

Or as we read in another Scripture:

I will call them my people which were not my people (Romans 9:25).

Writing to another group of believers in Galatia, explaining this new relationship, he said:

We are no longer under that guardian, [the ceremonial law] and you are, all of you, Sons of God! . . . there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one. . . you are the posterity of Abraham, the heirs he was promised (Galatians 3:27-29, *Jerusalem Bible*).

Thus the Gentile who surrenders all to God and accepts Him as his personal Saviour is both a believer and an "Israelite indeed." True believers of any race are true Israelites; they are one and the same.

Now note what this trained rabbi wrote to the believers at Ephesus:

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles. That at that time ye were without the Messiah and being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:11,12 KJV).

The Gentile who has not accepted salvation is an alien, a stranger from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But the Gentile who, having surrendered all to his Lord and having *accepted* Him as his personal Saviour, becomes a member of the "commonwealth of Israel" and will remain so as long as that relationship holds. According to the Scriptures, converted Gentiles by the mystery of grace are part of spiritual Israel. (The reader doubtless noticed that in Dr. H. M. S. Richard's introduction special attention is called

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to this chapter .

Now comes the question, what about literal Israelites? Do they have any place in God's program? Again we appeal to this scholarly rabbi. What was his attitude toward them?

I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed ...for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises (Romans 9:2-4).

He is speaking here of his own Jewish people. He calls them "my kinsmen according to the flesh" and declares that they, too, are "Israelites." Remember this was written about A.D.60. That was nearly thirty years after Christianity began. But what kind of Israelites were they? They were literal Israelites or "Israel according to the flesh." And for them he had great heaviness of heart. To his believing brethren in Corinth, he says:

Behold Israel after the flesh (I Cor. 10:18).

It is to be regretted that some seem to have the impression that the Jews were no longer to be called Israel. But Paul definitely speaks of them as "Israel" or "ethnic Israel." Those who are Jews by natural birth are "Israel according to the flesh." On the other hand, "spiritual Israel" consists of men and women of any and every race including Jews who are reborn by the Spirit of God into the family of God. Only as we recognize this great truth can we rightly interpret the Scriptures and understand many of the ancient prophecies relating to the future of either national or spiritual Israel.

We repeat: one who is born a Jew can properly be called "Israel according to the flesh," but this does not

make him a member of spiritual Israel. He must accept God's way of salvation before he can be saved. That was the message given to Nicodemus:

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

Later the Messiah said to His followers:

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).

Note again this statement to the Gentile believers in Rome:

For if God spared not the natural branches [literal Israel], take heed lest he also spare not thee [spiritual Israel] (Romans 11:21).

Here he refers to the Jewish people and calls them "natural branches" or natural Israel. In the same chapter he asks this question and then promptly answers it:

I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew (Romans 11:12).

Could language be clearer? According to the Scriptures the *Jewish people have not been cast away completely*. Here they are called God's people and it is quite clear he is speaking of literal Israel, not spiritual Israel. Why does he say that God has not cast away His people? Could it be that the Hebrew people, called by God and organized by divine intervention as a nation, still have a definite program to fulfill? Why are they still here after almost 2000 years without a homeland?

The Hebrews were a nation that God Himself

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organized. Other nations have moved into leadership by political and military power. But the Hebrews were organized into a nation under the definite direction of God. Once a group of slaves, these people were delivered by divine power and appointed for a definite work. Abraham, the father of this nation, was a God-called man. God told him that he would become a nation and a "company of nations." No wonder then that Paul says, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." We ask again, could it be that God is performing a work through the Jewish nation using them as a sign? That is something all might well ponder.

The main burden of the writer was for their salvation. He says,

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved (Romans 10:1).

While he calls them "Israel" he also indicates they are not "saved." Not only is he himself burdened for their salvation, but he lays it on the hearts of the Gentile believers to pray for them. Speaking to Gentile believers as one specially called to work for Gentiles, he opens up the whole question of Jew and Gentile relationships as he says:

For if the casting away of them [Jews] be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them [Jews] be, but life from the dead?

For if the first fruit [Jews] be holy, the lump [Israel] is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

And if some of the branches [Jews] be broken off, and thou [Gentile], being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them [Israel], and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches (Romans 11:15-18).

It is abundantly clear that both Jews and Gentiles must be

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grafted into the same tree, and the trunk of the tree is spiritual Israel. Some branches that were "broken off" because of unbelief were those Jews who had become blinded to spiritual values and had rejected the Messiah. Then Gentiles who were taken from a wild olive tree were grafted in. They took the places of those who had been broken off. They were taken, not because they were Gentiles, but because they had accepted God's mercy and His plan for salvation. This is in harmony with his statement in Romans 1:16 where he says:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel. . . for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also the Greek [or Gentile].

Salvation was made known first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. All can be saved by the grace of God through faith. And we are assured that even faith itself, comes as a gift from God. It is not something worked up but something that comes down from God. It is a gift. The big question is not where a man was born but whether or not he is *reborn*. By God's grace all of us can become members of the kingdom of grace. To any who might begin to say that the Jews had been cast aside in order that the Gentiles might be brought in, this rabbi says:

Well; because of unbelief they [*Jews*] were broken off, and thou [*Gentile*] standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear:

For if God spared not the natural branches [*Jews*], take heed lest he also spare not thee [*Gentile*] (*Romans 11:20, 21*).

When God permitted the Jews to be driven out of their homeland and scattered to all parts of the world, they became known by the phrase "the wandering Jew." They wandered sadly from country to country despised and ill-treated; without a homeland. They were regarded as the off-scouring of the earth. However, when

individual Jews turned to God and accepted His way of salvation they were grafted back into their own olive tree and became part of "spiritual Israel" which is eternal. Summing up the argument, Paul says to the Gentiles:

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them [*Jews*] which fell, severity; but toward thee [*Gentiles*], goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off.

Just as the Jews were "cut off" because of unbelief, so Gentiles who do not continue in the grace of God will also be "cut off." Continuing his presentation, this brilliant rabbi says:

If they [*Jews*] abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in for God is able to graft them in again.

For if thou [*Gentile*] were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree [*Israel*]: how much more shall these [*Jews*] which be the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.

It was easy for Gentile believers back there as it is for certain self-important folk of our own day to become puffed up and conceited, failing to realize, as this great teacher says:

That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (Romans 11:23-25).

Israel became partially blind because of their disobedience. Having rejected the One whom their prophets foretold, God could no longer use them to

enlighten the world. So, laying them aside as a nation, He called men and women of many different races to become His special people, His messengers of grace to the world.

These called-out ones from all nations, Peter referred to as a "chosen generation" — "a royal priesthood." To these Gentile believers, he said:

Come and let yourselves be built, as living stones, into a spiritual temple; become a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. . .

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, and a people claimed by God for his own, to proclaim the triumphs of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. You are now the people of God, who once were not his people; outside his mercy once, you have now received his mercy (1 Peter 2:2, 9, NEB).

The nation Israel had become blind. It was as if a veil hung over their faces. But when that veil is removed these dear people come to see the Saviour as He is — their Messiah and coming King! We have seen this happen in many lands. "What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead! (Romans 11:15).

Let us envision a day when "blindness in part" shall no more be the experience of this people. Has not the time come for the Jewish people to be given light? It could well be that we shall see as many Jews accepting the Messiah in a day as there were on the Day of Pentecost. The 3,000 who became believers that day were definitely led by the Holy Spirit. When that happens again the Jews will become a power to labor for their fellow Jews. And by God's grace, we can envision something like that happening in this, our day.

We reach the climax of the rabbi's argument in Romans 11:26-29:

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written,
There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and

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shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

For this is my covenant unto them [*Jews*], when I shall take away their sins.

As concerning the gospel, they [*Jews*] are enemies for your [*Gentile*] sakes: but as touching the election, they [*Jews*] are beloved for their fathers' sakes.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [*or are "irrevocable," N.E.B.*].

Nothing could be plainer than these inspired statements. God has a work still to be accomplished by and for the Jews. Could this be one of the reasons why this nation has never been really absorbed by the nations among whom they have been scattered? History records how other nations, having been conquered and driven out of their homeland, became amalgamated with the surrounding peoples and their identity lost. America has been called the "Melting Pot of the Nations" but as someone remarked, "the Jew does not melt." One of their ancient prophets has truly said:

The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations (Numbers 23:9).

The fact that even *one Jew exists* is a miracle of God. And that miracle has been performed by none other than God Himself who has *called* them, *elected* them, and *preserved* them. For as we noticed, the Scripture says:

God's choice stands, and they are his friends for the sake of the patriarchs. For the gracious gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29, NEB).

Or as Moffatt translates it,

God never goes back upon His gifts and call.

One of the great out-workings of Providence is yet to

be seen when thousands of Jews will accept their Messiah and personal Saviour. This is emphasized in other chapters. Now here is the conclusion of Paul, the brilliant rabbi:

For as ye [*Gentiles*] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their [*Jews*] unbelief;

Even so have these [*Jews*] also now not believed, that through your [*Gentiles*] mercy they also may obtain mercy.

For God hath concluded them [*Jews and Gentiles alike*] all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Then he exclaims in wonder:

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!
(Romans 11:30-33)

As we begin to fathom the depths of this revelation, we too cry out, "How unsearchable are his judgments!" God's dealings with both literal Israel and spiritual Israel are beyond human comprehension. In studying what God has said on these points we must realize that in some Scriptures God is speaking concerning "spiritual Israel," but in others He speaks concerning "literal Israel."

If we attempt to apply all of these Scriptures to either spiritual or literal Israel exclusively, we end up in confusion. That is why this great teacher, Paul, urged the believer to study in order to "rightly divide the Word of truth." Only the indwelling and guidance of the Holy Spirit can enable us to do this. Both the Old and the New Testaments are vital in our study concerning Israel's past, present, and future. It is imperative then that we learn to "rightly divide the Word of truth."

When Paul made the statement "all Israel shall be saved" he was speaking definitely concerning the true

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Israel of God or spiritual Israel, for unbelieving Jews are in as much need of salvation as are Gentiles — those who have never heard God's message of salvation. No person will ever be saved because he was born an Israelite. He must be reborn into the family of God. Many Scriptures seem to indicate that before the Messiah's return there will be a great stirring among the Jews, not only in the land of Israel, but among these dear people everywhere. It may well be that conditions in the world will impress them with the need for spiritual rather than political strength, and they will study anew what their ancient prophets have written. In *Acts of the Apostles* we read:

Israel has stumbled and fallen but this did not make it impossible for them to rise again. God did not reject them. . . God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew (p. 375).

The veil that is now over the faces of so many, God's Spirit will remove, and they will read the Scriptures in a new light. Then thousands will be led to acknowledge the Saviour and will be prepared to meet Him.

This author was greatly concerned about the Jewish people as emphasized in this statement:

The work for the Jews as outlined in the eleventh chapter of Romans, is a work that is to be treated with **special wisdom. It is a work that must not be ignored.** The wisdom of God must come to our people. In all wisdom and righteousness we must clear the King's highway (Letter 96, 1910; Emphasis supplied).

While, according to God's Word, the Jews as a nation will never be restored under the original covenant conditions and become the messengers of salvation to the unbelieving world, yet the nation has become one of the

great signs of the outworking of God's purpose in the earth and an omen of the imminent end of the age and the ushering in of the kingdom of glory. The restoration of Israel does not mean that the people in the land of Israel are now the chosen messengers of salvation to the nations of the world. But the regathering of Israel as a nation is one of the greatest signs of the Messiah's soon coming. The existence of Israel in the land of their fathers, while being a national movement, will become to those who respond to God's call a great spiritual rebirth.

Here is the promise:

And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. . . For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. . . For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 9:26, 10:12, 13).

Chapter Seventeen

THE MESSAGE OF MASADA

Have you ever been to Masada? Few places in Israel are as impressive as this mountain fortress by the Dead Sea.

When the Jewish Zealots launched what is known as the "Great Revolt" against their Roman rulers in 66 A.D., they were confident of victory. Although greatly outmatched in troops and weapons, they were not outmatched in ingenuity and courage. But defeat came at last. Their magnificent Temple was burned and Jerusalem, the capital, lay in ruins. Not only were the Jews fighting the Romans, they were also fighting each other; there was civil war in the city.

With more than 1,337,000 dead and hundreds of thousands sold into slavery, it looked as though the Jewish race was facing certain annihilation. On the 84th day of the siege the sacrifices in the Temple ceased. But the building was still a glorious structure. Titus, in charge of the Roman campaign, observing from the tower of Antonio this magnificent work of art, gave orders to "spare the Temple." But one of the soldiers in the excitement of the siege, threw a lighted torch into the building, and it was soon a mass of flames. It is said that even the Romans wept as they saw the destruction of this massive, ornate building.

The Jews were proud of their Temple, as well they might have been, because it was one of the finest

structures ever erected. A few years earlier, this prophecy had been made, "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." This was fulfilled to the letter. For after the destruction of the Temple, the area was plowed to recover the melted gold.

Some Jewish Zealots escaped from that holocaust and made their way south to Masada on the west side of the Dead Sea where a few were already entrenched. Herod the Great, erected this almost inaccessible fortress about 30 B.C. After he died a Roman garrison occupied it for a number of years. When war-inflamed Zealots made their way to this fortress they ascended this mountain in the desert, broke through the fortifications, destroyed the guards, and occupied the fortress from A.D. 60. It fell to the Romans in A.D. 73.

Led by Manahan, this daring group set up their headquarters, and determined to withstand their enemies. Masada became the Jews' last stronghold in the land. Actually the Great Jewish Revolt ended at Masada. Josephus, the Jewish historian, described what happened during the last few weeks of that awful siege. It was so shocking that most historians, even Jews, doubted the story.

Recently we climbed this mountain. The heat was intense — 125 degrees in the shade and no shade! We had familiarized ourselves with the archaeological report of this strange and uninviting place. Also we knew the report as given by Josephus in his *Jewish Wars*, which through the centuries has seemed almost too fantastic to believe. But it has now been confirmed in every detail, and adds much to the Israel story.

Who was Josephus? He was, at one time, a General in the Jewish army, but he turned traitor and joined the Romans. Little wonder that his writings were often discounted by his own people.

To understand this account, we should first know something of the place. Masada is a Hebrew word meaning fort or fortress. This unique spot was first fortified by Alexander Janneaus, Jewish high priest from 103 B.C. to 76 B.C. But it was Herod the Great, whom the

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Romans called a "client king" who turned this desert mountain into what he believed was an impregnable fortress. It is actually a plateau almost 2,000 feet long and about 700 feet wide. Herod built a double wall around it and he had huge storehouses for food, as well as cisterns capable of holding 1,400,000 cubic feet of water.

Herod built this because he feared the Jews among whom he was so unpopular. However, he feared the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra even more. She had threatened to cut him off and annex all of Judea to her kingdom. So this palace-fortress was a defense for himself and his family. It consisted of three palaces with hot and cold baths and numerous guest houses for his friends. There were at least two swimming pools, and the living quarters in the king's palace was lavish in the extreme. Enough food and general supplies could be stored to last many years. And the soil on this plateau, being much richer than that down in the valley, they were able to cultivate vegetables and even grow trees.

Most interesting of the three palaces was the one at the extreme northern point of this high plateau. It was built in three sections and seemed almost to hang over the great abyss, giving not only a fabulous view of the valley and the blue waters of the Dead Sea, but also providing good circulation of air, so essential in this hot arid area. When King Herod died the Romans took possession of the fortress.

Shortly after Jerusalem fell, a group of Zealots, as we have mentioned, entrenched themselves here as their military headquarters. They were joined later by other Zealots and held this bleak mountain fortress for years. When Jerusalem fell, General Silva, having been appointed Governor of Judea, was determined to root out every pocket of resistance. He knew something of the stronghold, Masada, and took personal charge of the campaign there. Having brought together all the troops at his command, he also summoned thousands of slaves and war prisoners. With their help, he built an outside wall near the foot of this fortress along which were posted sentries to keep close watch. The remains of this wall,

after nineteen centuries, can still be seen. It was six feet thick and more than two miles long. It crossed gullies and wadis, clinging at times to the steep mountainside.

The Romans set up eight army camps at various points, and these sites are also clearly visible today. A huge promontory juts out from the western cliff of Masada, about 400 feet below the summit. On this General Silva set up his headquarters. Ringed in by this new high wall and with the army camps set up at different intervals, the Romans felt they had the Zealots completely locked in.

The next step, however, was more difficult. How could the troops get inside? Following the same method as Vespasian used at Jotapata in Galilee, Silva gave orders for the building of a ramp that would reach the high walls. Soon soldiers, prisoners, and slaves were hauling earth, stones, and timbers to the top of the promontory and from there a ridge was built to permit a moving siege tower 90 feet high and also a mighty battering ram to proceed. Then with full equipment — artillery catapults, ballisters, and onagers for hurling darts, stones, and pots of flame — they were ready for the attack.

Capturing this stronghold, however, was a bigger task than the Romans had envisioned. The siege of Jotapata in the north lasted seven weeks, but the siege of Masada in the south required seven months. The ingenuity of those Jewish Zealots was amazing. But at last, outnumbered by more than fifteen to one, they recognized that defeat was inevitable. After months of continuous attack and the double wall of the fortress having been breached a number of times, those courageous Zealots knew the end was at hand.

It was in the early morning that the Roman invaders pushed their way into the fortress. The soldiers then gave a shout like a battle cry, but there was no response. Fearing that the silence was a hoax, the soldiers fanned out with unsheathed swords ready for action. But no attackers were in sight. Again they shouted, but all they heard was the uneasy thump of their own feet. Then,

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hearing a pathetic voice, they found an old woman standing near a big underground water cistern. Crouching behind her was another woman, even older, and with them five small children. From these two women they learned the story of what happened. These frightened women had overheard the men talking the night before. They had also heard the groans of the dying.

The Community Death Pact

Realizing the hopelessness of the situation, Eleazer Ben Israel, leader of the Zealots, called his men together and reminded them of the vow they had taken never to serve the Romans. "We were the first to rebel," he said, "and now we are the last to continue the fight. God alone is true and just. He is the Lord of mankind. If we wait to be captured tomorrow, we will all be either dead or slaves." Declaring that God had given them the chance to die as free men, he urged them to die an "honorable death"! The plan was terrible, and he urged them to act swiftly lest by hesitation they lose their courage. Having agreed to the plan, they chose ten of their number by lot to carry out the deadly work.

With anguish of heart, each man clasped his wife and children, and amid their tears they kissed each other good-bye. They then lay down to await the death stroke. The remaining ones hurriedly made a pile of all the possessions in the fortress and set fire to it. They did leave some food, however, to show the conquerors that they were not starving; they simply chose to die rather than to be slaves.

Again they drew lots to see who should do the final killing. Then, taking his place beside his slain loved ones, each of the ten awaited the sword of the one remaining man who then destroyed himself. There was actually only one suicide.

That was the story of the women as Josephus tells it. But could this story be true? For nineteen centuries many have doubted the accuracy of the report. It was to test the

validity of the Josephus story that the Israeli Department of Antiquities formed the Masada Archaeological Expedition. Headed by archaeologist Dr. Yigael Yadin they began to plan an important excavation. Yadin is the son of an outstanding archaeologist. He knew the country well, for he had been Chief of Staff in the Israeli army. Having led a number of successful military campaigns, and also some unusual archaeological digs, he knew that the Masada Expedition would be very different.

To uncover this fantastic site had long been the hope of Israeli archaeologists. Because people all over the world would be interested in this, he sent out a call for volunteers who would like to join in this unusual project. A notice appeared in the newspapers in Israel, but also in the *Observer* in London. This is how the announcement read: "The first phase preparation has been completed in Israel for the most spectacular archaeological expedition ever made in the Middle East. Excavation will begin in October at Masada, the fort near the Dead Sea, where the Jews made their last stand against the Romans from 70 A.D. . . . Anyone wishing to join between October and next March for a minimum two-weeks period and at his own expense (except for food and lodging which the expedition will provide) may apply, writing to Post Office 7041, Jerusalem, Israel."

Volunteers quickly responded. Requests came from many different countries and from people speaking many different languages; over four thousand people in all responded. They represented a variety of backgrounds; many were students from schools and colleges; others were teachers, businessmen, farmers, sailors, doctors, dentists, soldiers, writers, editors, architects, printers, pharmacists as well as butlers, gardeners, chamber maids, taxi drivers, shepherds, theologians, psychologists, and miners, and on and on. One was a violin maker, another an elephant tamer! One girl wrote saying, "I have no knowledge of archaeology but I have a good sense of humor." She was accepted and proved a great help. One or two stipulations were made very clear, "We do not work on Saturdays and those of you who will have

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enough energy left after a week's exertion to go for walks in the beautiful surroundings of the desert will be able to do so in organized tours." The challenge appealed to both men and women who, after being accepted, made their way to the wilderness of Judea and joined the group.

What they found there during three years of digging has proved not only the accuracy of the Josephus story but has added a great deal to scientific discovery. Grain was found in the storehouses, having been preserved after nineteen centuries because of the dry climate. Portions of Scripture used by the Jewish defenders were also discovered and even the remains of a synagogue in which these courageous men and women evidently worshipped.

While we can respect their loyalty to what they believed, we cannot but regret that these folk, following their leaders, were blinded to the real purpose of God for their nation. Having closed their ears to the clear counsels of the greatest Teacher of all time, they knew not the time of their visitation.

Forty-two years earlier, the One whom the nation's leaders rejected, had uttered grave warnings to the people He loved so dearly. Note His clear statements:

Ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies (Luke 21:20).

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children with thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation (Luke 19:43, 44).

He also said that,

Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:24).

Had the Jews of that time known "the day of their visitation," had they accepted their heaven-sent Messiah, how different their history would have been.

The Masada Archaeological Expedition finished its work in 1966, just before the Six-day War. The Israeli government issued a special medal inscribed to the heroism of that day with these words written in both Hebrew and English. One side read: "We shall remain free men" (words the Zealots had uttered and inscribed on their last night). The other side read: "Masada shall not fall again." Today the young recruits in the Israeli army are taken up to Masada. Moving around the once lavish rooms of that ancient fortress, they seem to catch the spirit of their ancestors. The officers of the Israeli armored forces, their crack regiments, take their vows at this spot under the inspiration of history.

The message of Masada is very real to this generation if we but stop and listen. While the spirit of those daring defenders burns like a steady flame in Israel today, yet again we say, the stark tragedy is that none of it need have happened. Had the Jews of that day heeded the message of God spoken so clearly through their prophets, they would have known that God was in their midst. But they were sadly blind and deaf to spiritual things.

What is the message of that mountain fortress for us today? Nine hundred years before the destruction of Masada, Jehosaphat, one of the godly kings of Israel, spoke to his people in one of the great crises of the nation. In the presence of the army generals and brave troops he cried, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established. Believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (II Chronicles 20:20). To declare defiantly that "Masada shall not fall again" is not sufficient. The strength and military might of a nation, great as that might be, is not sufficient. Only as we believe the Lord our God can we be established and only as we follow His counsel through the prophets shall we prosper.

Masada has also another great message. While the Zealots of that day could say, "We shall remain free men,"

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meaning, of course, politically free, yet the only freedom worthwhile is spiritual freedom. Ponder these words:

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

And again,

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:32, 36).

True freedom comes from the Author of freedom and not from the vows and promises of men.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (II Corinthians 3:17).

That is the message of Masada.

Will Masada fall again? In Revelation 6:14 we read,

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Looking down to that day of universal destruction Jeremiah says,

I beheld the mountains, and lo they trembled and all the hills moved lightly. . . And lo the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord and by his fierce anger (Jeremiah 4:23, 26).

When the Messiah comes in glory, Masada like every other fortress will fall, not by the armies of men but by the mighty power of God "when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isaiah 2:19). With Israel's ancient leader who wrote the 46th Psalm, we can say:

Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Chapter Eighteen

ISRAEL AND ARMAGEDDON

Armageddon is a big word, a terrifying word. While it is a Bible word, it is none the less terrifying. How will Israel and all the nations fare during Armageddon? What do the Scriptures say about this final deadly conflict?

Students of Bible prophecy vary in their interpretation of Armageddon. As we enter this area of unfulfilled prophecy, we naturally move with caution seeking to avoid any tendency to dogmatism. The word itself is found only once in Scripture (Revelation 16:16). But the Hebrew prophets from King David to Zechariah have given some vivid descriptions of this closing chapter in human history.

The Greek word *polemos*, translated "battle" in Revelation 16:14, reads "war" in most other translations such as the Revised Standard Version and New English Bible, Berkeley Version, Amplified New Testament, Fenton's translation, etc. "The battle of the great day of God Almighty" will be a war to the death between the forces of good and evil.

The Scriptures indicate that "*all the nations of the world*" will be involved (Jeremiah 25:26), and "*all the people of God*" both Jews and Gentiles will be vitally affected. *The Truth of God* will be the prime target in the controversy as it has been ever since Lucifer and his rebel angels challenged the throne of God. Finally heaven's King and His loyal angels will openly confront Satan and his demonic forces.

To understand all that is involved in Armageddon, one must see it in a much larger context than is often represented. In Revelation 16:13-16 we read of spirits of

devils gathering the "kings of the earth and of the whole world" to "a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Now the question is: Where is that "place" called Armageddon? Some claim there is no such place geographically and that the word is only symbolic.

Others, among them some outstanding scholars, however, see in the name much more than just a symbol. They associate the term Armageddon with the geographical Meggido in the north of Palestine. While the word Armageddon is found only once in Scripture (Revelation 16:16), yet the area seems to have been well understood by Bible writers. There are numerous references to this place in the Old Testament, such as "the valley of Megiddo" (II Chronicles 35:22), "the Plain of Megiddo" (Zechariah 12:11), the city of "Megiddo" (I Kings 9:15), and "the waters of Megiddo" (Judges 5:19). Authorities often emphasize the meaning of the word. One says it means "a place of troops"; another "a place of slaughter"; still another "a place of troops and squadrons." Dean Stanley says it is analogous to Ar Gerizim, the meeting place of Abraham and Melchizedek. There was an important pass from the ancient city of Megiddo, the ruins of which have been thoroughly excavated, through the mountains to the southwest and up to the valley of Jezreel in the northeast, then to the Kishon, which flows through the valley. We remember it was at Kishon that Elijah destroyed the prophets of Baal. To claim that Armageddon has no geographical location is both unfortunate and misleading. When John wrote the Revelation, he specifically called it "a place." But it also becomes a symbol of the ultimate clash when the destiny of God's true Israel, as well as every living soul on earth, will be settled, and settled forever. It will mark Satan's desperate attempt to defy the living God and destroy His people.

The tragic results of this world-engulfing combat have been dramatically portrayed by the prophets. John speaks of the time when:

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The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, are gathered together to make war.

And that war will be against God and the armies of heaven (Revelation 19:19 and 24). Jeremiah says,

Evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth, and the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth. . . .

They shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried (Jeremiah 25:32-33).

Isaiah says:

For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire (Isaiah 9:5).

John tells of,

A great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the hail (Revelation 16:21).

God once asked the patriarch Job,

Hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war (Job 38:22-23).

When God opens His armory, not all the powers of earth combined will be able to withstand the onslaught Armageddon, it seems, will bring mankind to the brink of self-extinction. But it will terminate suddenly when the Messiah the king leads the armies of heaven and appears in glory to deliver His people and to bring a speedy end to man's muddled misrule. Note Isaiah's graphic picture:

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For behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD will be many (Isaiah 66:15-16).

In the time of Noah there were no neutrals nor will there be in the battle of Armageddon. On the one side there will be no casualties, on the other no survivors. Some wonder if it is possible to know definitely about the future. The late Dr. William F. Albright, eminent archaeologist and Professor of Semitic languages, says with confidence concerning God's inspired spokesmen:

The prophets were not only dedicated men, but also predictors of the future. This is fully recognized in Biblical tradition but has been under-emphasized by modern Biblical scholars.

How tragically true! Today it is often regarded as a mark of scholarship to disbelieve prophecy. Eight centuries before the common era, this promise was given through Amos:

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7).

Instead of thinking of prophecy as mere speculation, let us regard it as divine revelation. And God has certainly revealed much concerning the future of both Israel and the nations of the world including the United States of America. While some students of prophecy spend much time in the study of Antichrist both past and future, they often give little heed to the prophecies concerning Israel, the reason being that many hold the belief that when the Jewish leaders nineteen centuries ago rejected their

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Messiah, then all the promises of God to Israel were automatically transferred to Spiritual Israel. But is this a sound conclusion? Is this "rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

With the rise of Christianity, a new group came into existence known as the "church." The New Testament mentions — *Jews, Gentiles, and the Church*. Note this clear statement to the Corinthian believers:

Give none offense neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles nor to the church of God (I Corinthians 10:32).

In no place in the New Testament do we find the Jews completely set aside. Scripture says,

If their falling-off means the enrichment of the Gentiles, how much more their coming to full strength! (Romans 11:12, N.E.B.)

And again,

If their rejection has meant the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean? (Verse 15).

True, he was speaking of their acceptance individually. But that is also the case with Gentiles; we all become part of the body of believers individually. And not until we accept God's grace and forgiveness are we His people. Then he concludes by saying, "Partial blindness has come upon Israel only until the Gentiles have been admitted in full strength" (Verse 25, N.E.B.), or "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (K.J.V.)

What does the Scripture mean by this? Both Daniel and Ezekiel deal with Israel's place in the last days. While Daniel states the truth in broad panoramic prophecies, Ezekiel, his contemporary, goes into great detail showing how events will shape up to make possible the fulfillment of those prophecies. When these men wrote their

messages, they both were captives in Babylon and, as far as we know, neither ever returned to his homeland. But they were given prophetic pictures of the final events of human history. Unless and until we recognize this we shall not be able to comprehend the full scope of divine prediction.

We have already studied in some detail chapters 36 and 37 of Ezekiel. Chapter 38 introduces us to formidable foes of God's people under the names of "Gog" and "Magog." Magog is first mentioned in what some scholars speak of as the "Table of Nations" found in Genesis 10:1, 2. Magog was the grandson of Noah, being the second son of Japheth, one of the three sons of the old patriarch. Before the dawn of secular history, the descendants of Magog seemed to have settled in the region of the Caucasus and northern Armenia. While some modern scholars declare that little can be known of the Magogites yet — Josephus, the Jewish historian, says:

Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites but by the Greeks were called Scythians (see map, page 145).

Prominent leaders in the early church, such as Theodoret and Jerome, the Bible translator, agree with him. The *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* is very explicit concerning their identity. It reads:

A strict geographical location would place Magog's dwelling between Armenia and Media, perhaps on the shores of the Araxes. But the people seem to have extended farther north across the Caucasus, filling there the extreme northern horizon of the Hebrews (Ezekiel 38:15 and 39:2). This is the way Meshech and Tubal are often mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions (Vol. 5, p. 14).

They were mainly nomads and roamed over the territory

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north of the Caspian and Black Seas. Herodotus, the Greek historian writing in the fifth century B.C., describes the Scythians as blood-thirsty savages, living by pillage and warfare. Ezekiel mentions a great leader arising out of this area named "Gog" or "the chief prince," who will appear in "the latter days." The Scripture calls him "the prince of Rosh. . . in the land of Magog." (See *New English Bible* and many other translations). This leader named Gog seems destined to act as the commander-in-chief of a great confederacy. And according to the prophecy, appears to make a vicious attack upon the land of Israel just before the final events of human history. This could well be the fuse that ignites the climaxing great war — Armageddon. We are not left to human conjecture on these things, however, for God Himself has spoken. Note the Scriptures:

Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day, when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?

And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people [*nations*] with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:

And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen [*nations*] may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes (Ezekiel 38:14-16, K.J.V.).

Now comes the question: Who is this power called Gog? Scripture links him with "the land of Magog." And scholars generally locate this in the Caucasus area. In his treatise *The Coming Great Northern Confederacy*, Dr. L. Sale-Harrison says:

It is interesting to note that the very word "Caucasus" means "Gog's Fort." Gog and

Chasan [*fort*] are two oriental words from which it is derived.

"Interesting" indeed! The world will not soon forget Hitler's great war machine as it rolled so victoriously over Europe a number of years ago. But it met its fate when it came into the area of "Gog's Fort." In January, 1942, those armies discovered the strength and terror of that "Fort." From there they were rolled back. But Scripture speaks of Gog as the commander-in-chief of a great confederacy and declares he will come "out of the north quarters" or the "far recesses of the north," *New English Bible*, or "out of the uttermost parts of the north," *Revised Standard Version*. Almost every one of the new translations render "Gog" as the "prince of Rosh." We are quite aware of the efforts of some to discredit any use of Gog or Rosh. But we dare not treat this scripture lightly. What is in the Word of God demands our careful study. And it is well to remember that not all the great theologians live in this generation, nor are they all living in one country.

Through the centuries, devout and eminent scholars have written much concerning this. We have already referred to Robert Lowth, Anglican Bishop of London, whose scholastic standing has never been questioned. He says:

Rosh, taken as a proper name in Ezekiel, signifies the inhabitants of Scythia.

And Gesenius, the outstanding and unsurpassed Hebraist, in his *Hebrew-English Lexicon* agrees with Lowth, declaring that,

Rosh was a designation for the tribes then north of the Taurus Mountains, dwelling in the neighborhood of the Volga.

Dr. Keil, a careful German scholar, emphasizes that Rosh should be translated as a proper name. He says,

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The Bysantine and Arabic writers frequently mentioned a people called Ros or Rus, dwelling in the country of Taurus and reckoned among the Scythian tribes (*Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*).

Robert Watson, in his excellent work *The Biblical and Theological Dictionary*, published in 1831 states the same truth:

Magog signifies the country or people, and Gog the king of that country; the general name of the northern portions of Europe and Asia, or the districts of the Caucasus or Mount Taurus (p. 417).

Space permits only the briefest mention of other writers, such as Herodotus and Pliny, both of whom identify Magog as ancient Scythia. The important point of this prophecy, however, is not so much to whom it applies as what will be attempted in "the latter days."

Speaking of Gog and his confederates, the Lord says:

After many days thou shalt be visited (Ezekiel 38:8).

The Hebrew word translated "visited" is *paqad* and means to "look over or to inspect." In other words it is as if God says:

In the latter days, I will turn the spotlight on you Gog.

When the spotlight of prophecy is beamed on this power, we discover more than just a military leader. Instead we see a blasphemous *world movement* determined to destroy Israel and to attack Israel's God and uproot from the minds of men everywhere the idea of God as an omniscient, transcendent Deity. This Gog power

appears as the implacable foe of the Jews and of all those also who put their trust in the Lord, our Creator and Redeemer.

On June 12, 1929, at the second "*All-Union Congress of Atheists*" held in Moscow, Yaroslavsky, president of the "League of the Militant Godless" and the featured speaker of the day, shouted in his opening speech: "*We are against God.*" And that was true. Nor has the basic philosophy changed through the years. On another occasion the same Yaroslavsky set forth the objective of the movement in these words:

Therefore we cultivate in the children a hatred for the ties which religion imposes. We demand of the child to be a fighter against religion anywhere, at the school and in the family.

Here indeed is militant atheism. But no power that sets itself against the God of Israel can endure.

The word "Gog" occurs thirteen times in Scripture and usually as a proper name. In Ezekiel 38:17, the Lord God says:

I spoke in days of old through my servants the prophets who prophesied in those days unceasingly, it was you whom I threatened to bring against Israel (N.E.B.).

Evidently some prophets prior to Ezekiel had prophesied concerning Gog. As far back as Numbers 24:7 Balaam, the prophet, was predicting the future of Israel, saying, "His king shall be greater than Agag." The Septuagint and also the Samaritan Codex has "Gog" instead of Agag. Professor Ralph Earle in his recent book *What About the Second Coming?*, p. 75, maintains that "the Battle of Gog and Magog occurs *after* the millennium." Other writers seem to agree. But let us examine the case.

To avoid confusion and help us get a correct understanding of "Gog" as used in the Scriptures, it is wise to compare the "Gog" of Ezekiel with the "Gog" of

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Revelation, for he is mentioned in both books. To clarify the picture we set them forth by contrast. While both are pictured as enemies of God and His people, they relate to events a thousand years apart. Some sincere Bible teachers such as Earle claim that both Ezekiel and the prophet John were writing about the same event. But Ezekiel specifically states that the "Gog" of whom he writes will make his attack in "the latter days" (which expression cannot be made to fit in *after* the millennium), whereas John writes of Gog and Magog at the end of the millennium. *Note these important contrasts:*

BEFORE MILLENNIUM

The "Gog" of Ezekiel, Chapter 38, will be overthrown just before our Lord's return, at which time he says, "the earth shall shake at my presence and the mountains shall be thrown down" (verse 20).

The "Gog" of Ezekiel comes out of "the uttermost parts of the north" as the defiant leader of certain nations named and existent in the world today (Ezekiel 38:15).

The "Gog" of Ezekiel is the leader of a great coalition of certain nations and their armies "Be thou a *commander* unto them" (Ezekiel 38:7, A.R.V.). "You yourself shall be their commander" (Fenton's translation).

The "Gog" of Ezekiel will be destroyed by the seven last plagues before the second coming of Christ "I will summon every kind of terror against Gog. . . With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into

AFTER MILLENNIUM

The "Gog" of Revelation 20:8-10 will be destroyed by the direct intervention of God at the end of the millennium when the devil will be "cast into the lake of fire" (verse 9).

The "Gog" of Revelation together with "Magog" will "deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth" having been resurrected for final judgment (Rev. 20:8, R.S.V.)

The "Gog" of Revelation is clearly Satan who leads the last great federation of all the anti-God forces of the ages arrayed against God at the close of the millennium. "Satan shall be loosed. . . and shall gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Revelation 20:7, 8).

The "Gog" and "Magog" of Revelation, led by Satan, surround the "beloved city" the New Jerusalem. But they and the devil who deceives them will then be "thrown in to the lake of fire." Death and Hades will then

judgment with him; and I will
rain upon him and his hordes
... torrential rains and hailstones,
fire and brimstone" (Ezekiel
38:21-22, R.S.V.).

be no more. This is the second
death" (Rev. 20:10, 14, R.S.V.).

Sound prophetic interpretation seems to demand that we separate these two events. Ezekiel was predicting events to happen *before* the millennium, whereas John's were to happen *at the end* of the thousand years.

After the destruction of sin and sinners, the prophet John saw what many other prophets saw — "a new heaven and a new earth. . . and there was no more sea" (Revelation 21:1). Peter speaks of the heavens disappearing "with a great rushing sound" and declares:

The elements will disintegrate in flames, and the
earth and all that is in it will be laid bare (II Peter
3:10, N.E.B.).

Like all prophets, Peter looked forward to "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (verse 13). At the end of the thousand years, God destroys the author of evil and all his rebellious hosts. The controversy between sin and righteousness will then be ended forever. But, we repeat, that will not occur until the thousand years are expired at the end of the millennium. In our next chapter, we will note briefly the allies of Gog mentioned in Scripture, and their geographical locations.

God's great battle against the forces of evil will be fought in two sections, a thousand years apart. In other words, Armageddon, or "the battle of the great day of God Almighty" will be interrupted by the coming of Messiah the King. All who are not ready for that cataclysmic event will be "slain by the brightness of His coming" (II Thessalonians 2:8, 2:7-9). Then at the end of the millennium they, with all the unrighteous dead, will be raised for judgment (Revelation 20:8-15). Led by the devil, they organize for attack on the Holy City, Gog and Magog having been resurrected with all the wicked for

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final judgment will join in the attack against God and His redeemed people. But we read that fire comes down from heaven and destroys them. (See Revelation 20:9.) This will be the end of all evil and rebellion.

Ezekiel and John were both describing the same event but in two sections. Ezekiel 38:19-22 describe conditions resulting from the seven last plagues *before* Christ comes, whereas, the prophet John describes what happens *after* the millennium. To be able to “rightly divide the word of truth,” we must study the whole of divine revelation.

Chapter Nineteen

GOG AND MAGOG

CONFRONTED BY ISRAEL'S GOD

Just prior to the Six-day War, the chief of chaplains of the Israeli forces commended Psalm 83: 1-5, to the troops as a daily prayer. And during this Arab-Israeli war we saw Israeli soldiers praying this same prayer. Could anything be more significant? Note these verses:

Keep not silence, O God. . . For lo, your enemies are in tumult and those who hate you have raised their heads. They lay crafty schemes against your people. . . They have said, Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be in remembrance no more. For they have consulted together with one consent and one heart; against you they make a covenant. . . (Psalms 83:1-5, *Amplified Bible*).

Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek Thy name, O Yahweh. Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea let them be put to shame, and perish; that men may know that Thou, whose name alone is Yahweh, as the Most High over all the earth (Verses 16-18).

A great confederacy of ten nations is brought to view in verses 6 to 8. This is deeply significant. Many outstanding Bible scholars are confident there is a prophetic element in this psalm. More than two hundred years ago, Bishop Lowth, the great theologian of London, expressed the view that the fate of ancient Edom "seems by no means to come up to the terms of this prophecy or to justify so high-wrought and so terrible a description." He goes on to state that "this prophecy has a further view to events still future; to some great revolutions to be effected in later times." Could it be that the "great revolutions" are happening today?

Now let us turn our attention again to Ezekiel 38 and view briefly and historically the allies of Gog as foretold by the prophet. We will notice them in their order, beginning with verse 2.

"The land of Magog" was well understood by ancient historians. They state that the Magogites were divided into two distinct peoples — the European, known as Japhetic and the Asiatic, known as Turarian. The Greeks and the Romans spoke of the Japhetic race as Sarmatians, (not to be confused with Samaritans) of whom the Slavs are direct descendants. Some claim them to be a mixture of Medes and Scythians. Their region was originally that huge area north of the Black Sea, extending all the way from the Baltic to the Ural Mountains. The other group, the Turanians, known as the Asiatic Magogites or Scythians, were found in that great plateau in central Asia where the Tartars, the Cossacks, the Kalmaks and the Mongols are located today. This whole region was for centuries known as Muscovy.

Persia is the first country in the list mentioned in Ezekiel 38. This is present-day Iran. We might wonder why this land is introduced. A glance at the map will reveal how much easier it would be to move a large land army across the Elburz Mountains on the edge of Iran rather than attempting to cross the Caucasus Mountains that border Turkey. We do not know all that the future

holds, but it could well be that before the great prophesied war this land, although Arian and not Arab, might even be associated with the anti-Israel bloc. Ever since her acceptance into the old League of Nations in 1920, Persia, now Iran, has been growing in prestige, as her recent national celebration to which international representatives from all the great powers were invited, so clearly revealed.

Ethiopia is next included in the group. Scholars insist this is not the Ethiopia we generally think of today, but rather the land of Cush, as Moses recorded in Genesis 2:13. Daniel 11:43 mentions "Ethiopians" but these are called Cushites in the *New English Bible* and other translations. Gesenius, in his *Hebrew-English Lexicon*, among other scholars claims that the land of Cush is in Africa, south of Egypt. Cush is a Hebrew word translated more than twenty times "Ethiopia" in the K.J.V. This has caused confusion in some minds, but it all fits into place when we understand that the prophet was speaking of Cush located south of Egypt rather than the country which for centuries was Abyssinia but is today called Ethiopia.

Libya or *Put*, as in the *New English Bible*, has a long and interesting history. This land is mentioned in Genesis 10:6 and refers to a people who migrated to an area west of Egypt and today comprises the nations of North Africa such as Algeria and Morocco. The Septuagint Version, translated about 250 B.C., includes Libya with Put. Josephus and Pliny both locate this land in northern Africa. This whole area, today, seems eager to be allied with the great power of the extreme north.

Gomer and all his hordes is next mentioned. These, according to Bible historians, "settled on the north of the Black Sea, and then spread themselves southward and westward to the extremities of Europe" (*Young's Analytical Concordance*). Dr. Richard Watson says:

These were known to the Greeks as Cimmerians, which in later centuries became known as Germanic Tribes or the Cambric or the

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Gomerians extending themselves from the Euxine to the Atlantic and from Italy to the Baltic (*Biblical and Theological Dictionary*, p. 417, 1832 Edition).

But Dr. Harry Rimmer declares they were originally a Balkan people who migrated south, fought the Assyrians, then headed north by another route, capturing Cappodicia which became their stronghold. It is claimed that the Armenian name for Cappodicia is Gamir and is derived from the name Gomer. This may well be the case.

"Gomer" or "Gimirrai" were a people from the Armenian highlands, according to a cuneiform inscription. In the seventh century B.C., close to the time of Ezekiel, these ruthless tribes of Aryans swept down from the north causing great havoc. While the prophet was familiar with these people, his prophecy in chapter 38 has its main applications "in the latter days" — a time far removed from his day.

Togarmah, of the north quarters, adds still more interest to the group. The late Professor N. Raymond Edman, Ph. D., a scholar who was president of Wheaton College, Illinois, declares that "The ancestors of modern Armenia claim that the father of their race, Haik, was the son of Togarmah, and probably the Turkoman tribes of Central Asia, together with Siberia, the Turks and Armenians (*The Sunday School Times*, Sept. 10, 1921). In his book *The Coming War*, Dr. Harry Rimmer says that "all Armenian literature refers to the land and its people as 'The House of Togarmah'...linking them to the grandson of Noah." According to their own claims, Armenia was founded by sons of Togarmah. This is emphasized also by Gesenius. The *New English Bible* speaks of the squadron of Bethtogarmah coming from "the far recesses of the north" (Ezekiel 38:6). The expression therefore evidently includes a larger group than just the tribes of Central Asia.

Until recent years, it would have been impossible to imagine a confederacy of such widely divergent peoples as those listed in Ezekiel 38. But under the rallying cry of

"freedom for the underprivileged," a world revolution seems today inevitable. This is no sudden emergence, however, for as far back as 1776, Adam Weishaupt organized the "Order of the Illuminati" or the *enlightened*. The main objective of this was to create a vastly different world order. The goals of the Illuminati could be summarized under six headings according to the historian Nesta Webster of Britain. She lists them as:

1. Abolition of monarchy and all ordered government
2. Abolition of all private property
3. Abolition of all private inheritance
4. Abolition of patriotism
5. Abolition of the family (i.e. of marriage and all morality and the institution of communal education of children)
6. Abolition of all religion

Such theories were not entirely original with Weishaupt, but he crystallized them while he was Professor of Canon Law in the Ingolstadt University in Bavaria. He was later driven from his homeland and fled to France where he joined the free-thinkers and radical philosophers of Paris. These ideas became the seed-plot of the French Revolution, which not only destroyed the monarchy but shook France to her very foundations.

During that bloody revolution, the Bible was abolished by government legislation and the houses of worship closed. Those years were a dark period in French history. But after the revolution the movement made its way north and more than a century later, in 1917, broke out in a similar revolution aimed at the destruction of all religion. Having hibernated, the ideas of the Bavarian professor broke forth anew under the name of a "*new gospel*."

Speaking for his country, the conspirator Bakun in 1869 said:

Brethren, I come to announce unto you a new gospel, which must penetrate to the very ends of

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the world [*world revolution*]. The old world must be destroyed and replaced by a new one. . . The Lie must be stamped out and give way to Truth. . . The first lie is God; the second lie is Right. . . and when you have freed your minds from the fear of God, and of the childish respect for the fiction of Right, then all the remaining chains that bind you, and which are called science, civilization, property, marriage, morality, and justice will snap asunder like threads. . . Our first work must be **destruction and annihilation of everything that now exists**; you must accustom yourself to destroy everything, the good with the bad; for if but one atom of this old world remains, the new will never be created (Quoted in *Russian Events in the Light of Bible Prophecy*, pp. 39-40 by Louis Rauman, emphasis added).

Rabaund, at the time France was moving into her revolution, set forth the same ideas almost word for word.

These principles, in a greater or lesser degree, are penetrating every land of earth today. Methods have changed with the decades, but the objectives are the same. As Nesta Webster says,

Therefore it is no fantastic theory but the literal truth to say the present world crisis is a conflict between the powers of good and evil. Christianity [*and we could add Judaism*] is a beleaguered citadel surrounded by the dark forces which have mustered for the supreme onslaught. (*The World Revolution*, pp. 325-326).

Karl Marx has well been called "the doctrinal father" of Atheistic Socialism. But all he did was to interpret the *philosophy of Weishaupt* and make it more acceptable. It is claimed that these ideas,

have helped light the fires of every revolution in the two hundred years since they were first

published. (Edward Hodrett in *The Cultivated Mind*, p. 27).

And speaking of Marx, the same writer declares that his teachings have:

Had more impact on mankind than those of anyone else except Jesus (Ibid.).

Many years ago a far-seeing author from whose writings we have already quoted, wrote these revealing words:

The world-wide dissemination of the same teachings that led to the French Revolution — all are tending to involve the whole world *in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France.* (*Education*, p. 228)

One high-ranking official, Comrade Solz, a few years ago set forth the goal of his Party by this declaration:

Faith in God, whether it be Jewish or Christian, only weakens the will of men for the fight. All gods are the same poison. War, without quarter, should be declared on all.

Such is the God-less blasphemy which has marked the history of this growing opposition to the God of Israel and Christianity whose name has been consistently profaned by the one named by the prophet Ezekiel as "Gog."

The prophet does more than name the powers that combine to attack Israel in "the latter days"; he even reveals the strategy of this confederacy which plans the invasion of the Holy Land. It seems as if army, navy, and air force combine. Ezekiel's description is certainly impressive:

Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou

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shalt be like a cloud to cover the land (Ezekiel 38:9).

The New English Bible reads:

You will come up driving in like a hurricane; you will cover the land like a cloud, you and all your squadrons, a great concourse of peoples [*nations*].

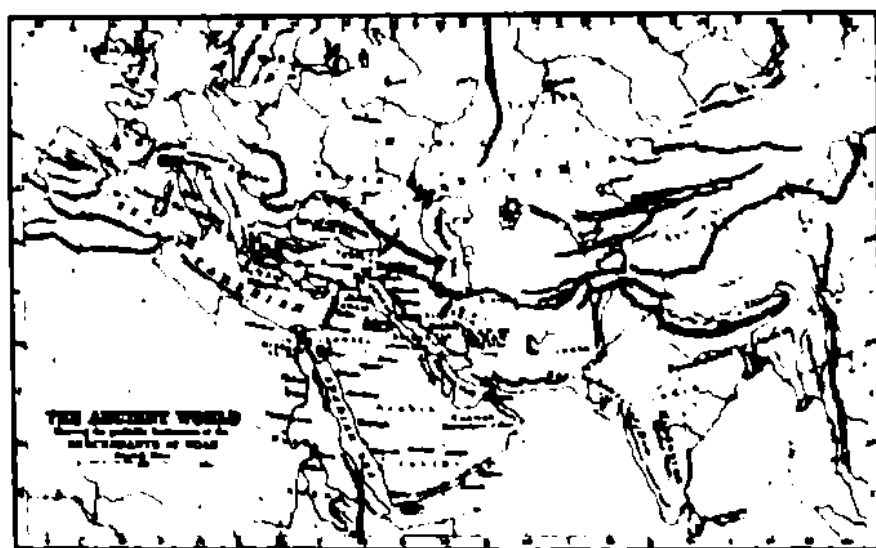
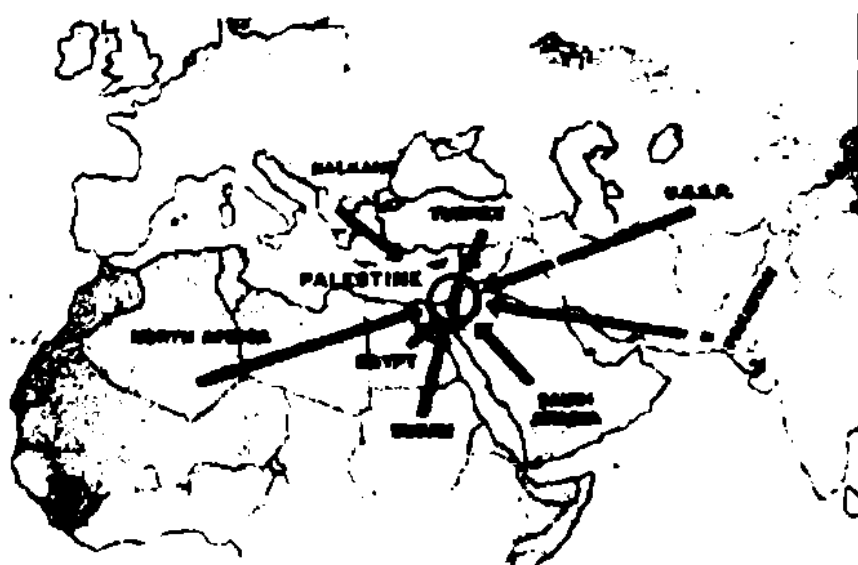
Ezekiel of course had never seen an army "ascend" and "come like a cloud." But God's message is very definite and filled with arresting details. Many see this as a forecast of aerial warfare. Squadrons of jets leave trails of smoke that not only look like clouds but to the prophet could sound like a storm. Many times we have heard giant planes as they break the sound barrier and it surely sounds like claps of thunder. Ezekiel was trying to describe something he had never seen nor heard. To our generation, however, nothing in his description is strange.

And if this is a prophecy of aerial warfare then it is evident Israel would not become an independent nation until its armies could take to the skies.

Now notice verse 10.

"Thus saith the Lord God; It shall also come to pass that at the same time shall things come into thy mind [the mind of the invader] and thou shalt think an evil thought" or "conceive a mischievous purpose."

Evil thoughts, we know, come from the devil. In Revelation 16:12-16 we read of "the spirits of devils" going forth from the dragon or the devil unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." That great battle is really the sixth plague, which the nations will be actually fighting when the Messiah comes in glory. Ezekiel 38:11, 12 describes "the evil thought" that inspires the invasion. We read:





Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be **LIKE A CLOUD** to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

Ezekiel 38 : 9

"Thou shalt say 'I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates to take a spoil, to take a prey.' "

In Ezekiel's day, towns and cities were enclosed with high walls and strong gates. But when this prophecy applies Israel will be an open land whose prosperity and wealth is the envy of many nations.

Verse 13 is particularly interesting for it mentions "Sheba Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish." In Ezekiel's day there was no Mediterranean Sea, it was known as the Sea of Tarshish (see ancient map.) "The merchants of Tarshish" would be those that trade on this great sea, especially those nations with fleets of "large sea-going vessels" (*The International Bible Dictionary*, Vol. IV p. 2775). The prophecy indicates that some great power friendly to Israel with naval ships will be poised in the Mediterranean in case of an attack. Furthermore one of the powers mentioned is evidently symbolized by a lion for the prophet speaks also of "the young lion thereof" or as Fenton's translation reads, "*the merchants of Tarshish and all her young lions.*"

It is not difficult to locate this power. Was it not the lion kingdom that conquered the Ottoman Empire in 1918? And that same power moved to make "a national homeland for Jews" in Palestine. Since then Jews have been finding their way back to the land of their fathers from every country of earth. And no one will deny that Britain and her cubs have played a major role in stabilizing the Middle East in recent decades. While the balance of power has shifted largely from Britain to America yet the same guiding principles are still being carried out. Some even look upon America as a "lion" kingdom despite the fact that two hundred years ago she broke ties with Britain and since then the eagle is the symbol of this great super power. And who, like Britain, is concerned about Israel's future.

The prophecy not only uncovers the strategy of the

invader but also locates the headquarters of the confederacy. God says in verses 14 and 15:

"Thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts" or from "the uttermost parts of the north"

R.S.V. And it will be *"as a cloud to cover the land"* and *"it shall be in the latter days."*

We are now living in the latter days and in these "latter days" there had to be a nation called Israel or the prophecy would have failed. The restoration of the nation Israel is clearly a concomitant to the whole scene. Moreover the invaders come for this one purpose.

"To take a spoil, and to take a prey: to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited." But God says that "at the same time when Gog shall come up against the land of Israel . . . my fury shall come up in my face" or "my wrath will boil over" N.E.B. And "there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel," verses 18 and 19.

"What is the 'fury' or the 'wrath' of God? Certain prophecies in the book of Revelation provide the key to our understanding. In chapters 15 and 16 we read of 'the seven last plagues' in which are 'filled up the wrath of God' - Rev. 15:1. Chapter 16 describes these terrible scourges. When the seventh plague occurs there is a great earthquake and great hailstones fall from the sky, each stone weighing as much as 75 pounds! "Destruction upon destruction is the way another prophet describes it. Jeremiah 4:20-23. Note Ezekiel's description adds other detail:

"The fish of the sea and the birds in the air, the wild animals and all reptiles that move on the ground, all mankind on the face of the earth, all shall be shaken before me. Mountains shall be torn up, the terraced hills collapse, and every wall crash to the ground. I will summon universal terror against Gog, says the Lord God, and his men shall turn their swords against one another. I will bring him to judgement with pestilence and

bloodshed; I will pour down teeming rain, hail, and fire and brimstone, upon him, upon his squadrons, upon the whole concourse of peoples with him. Thus will I prove myself great and holy and make myself known to many nations; they shall know that I am the Lord. (Ezekiel 38:20-23)

The Scripture makes clear that this frightful destruction will come when the world least expects it, and at a time when the world is in the midst of a universal peace movement. The Scripture says:

When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape. (I Thessalonians 5:3)

Could it be that the gathering of the nations to "the place in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Revelation 16:16) is the climax of a series of deceptions when Satan, appearing as "an angel of light" and impersonating the Lord himself will declare he has come in fulfillment of the Scriptural promise to bring universal peace? Are we prepared if Satan were to come as a great leader, teacher, and benefactor? We are told that the deception will be so strong that if it were possible "even the very elect will be deceived" (Matthew 24:21).

It may not be generally known that the forces of godlessness have already undertaken the organization of a new and universal church, called "The Church of World Brotherhood." It is also reported that a new "Bible" is being prepared called the *Evolving World Bible*. In it the account of creation and redemption, together with all the accounts of miracles, will be eliminated, the reason being that nothing that savors of the transcendent is acceptable in this "scientific age." Jesus may then be made to appear not as the Messiah but as the leader of the masses against the "establishment." It is even suggested that the Holy Land will become the headquarters of such a new World Organization. This is all being done under the over-all plan for developing "The Kingdom-of God Social order."

Tremendous events are about to take place in our

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world and only those who know the Word of God, those whom God calls "the children of light" (1 Thessalonians 5:5), will be shielded from the great deceptions that will take the world captive. Nothing, of course, would be so welcome as a plan that would insure world peace. But if such a plan is perpetrated by demon powers and in defiance of the living God, the result can be nothing but tragic. Note these solemn words of warning:

Be on your guard. . . or else that day may catch you like the springing of a trap — for it will come upon every inhabitant of the whole earth (Luke 21:34-35, Phillips Translation).

Arnold Toynbee, in his book *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, describes this trend toward world government in this forthright statement:

We can foresee that, when world government does come, the need for it will have become so desperate that mankind will not only be ready to accept it. . . but will deify it. . . The virtual worship that has been paid to Napoleon, Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler and Mao indicated the degree of idolization that would be the reward of an American or Russian Caesar who did succeed in giving the world a stable peace at any price.

Another writer, looking into the future, penned these descriptive words:

Fallen angels upon earth form confederations with evil men. In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of the world. Rebellion against God's holy law will be fully

ripe. But the true leader in all this rebellion is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God and deify him (Evangelism, pp. 365-366).

It is significant that a world famous historian and outstanding Biblical author foresaw the same thing and used the same expression about deifying the coming World Power. In a radio broadcast Toynbee said:

By forcing on mankind more and more lethal weapons, and at the same time making the world more and more interdependent economically, technology has brought mankind to such a degree of distress that we are ripe for the deifying of any new Caesar who might succeed in giving the world unity and peace.

Historians, philosophers, and journalists are foreseeing the same things the prophets of old predicted! Because of its strategic geographical location, the Holy Land anciently became a natural land-bridge to three continents—Europe, Asia, and Africa. Consequently Palestine became the battleground of contending armies during millenniums. In recent decades, however, Israel has developed into a wealthy, cultural, religious, and economic center. A place on which the eyes of the world are focused.

That there will be a gathering together of many nations under a great and powerful leader in "the latter days" is clearly foretold by the prophets. Through Joel, God says:

Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen [nations] . . . to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen [nations] (Joel 3:11, 12).

And again, through the prophet Ezekiel, God says:

My wrath will boil over.

Then he goes on to say:

In that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel (verses 18-19).

The great earthquake spoken of in the prophecy of Revelation 16, the greatest earthquake of all time, is associated with King Messiah's return to earth. Note how Ezekiel describes this frightful scene:

The fish in the sea and the birds in the air, the wild animals and reptiles that move on the ground, all mankind on the face of the earth, all shall be shaken before me. Mountains shall be torn up, the terraced hills collapse, and every wall crash to the ground. I will summon universal terror against Gog, says the Lord GOD, and his men shall turn their swords against one another. I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will pour teeming rain, hailstones hard as rock, and fire and brimstone, upon him, upon his squadrons, upon the whole concourse of peoples with him. Thus will I prove myself great and holy and make myself known to many nations; they shall know that I am the Lord [Yahweh] (Ezekiel 38:20-23, N.E.B.).

The K.J.V. reads:

All men that are upon the face of the earth shall shake at my presence.

This surely is "the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty," at the end of the age when Messiah comes, described in Revelation 16:14. And it will be more than a military affair in a little corner of southwestern Asia; it will be a world-wide struggle led by demons who will gather all the nations and lead them into a war against God. It is not difficult to see this as the climax in the great

controversy started by Lucifer long ago at the very headquarters of the universe. This conflict will not be confined to any one land. The issues are much larger than usually imagined. The Scriptures indicate that every land of earth will be involved. As we have already noticed the Greek word *polemos*, translated "battle" in Revelation 16:14 is more often translated "war." Armageddon will be a demon-inspired revolt against God. It will be a war to the death, and so terrible will be the slaughter that in the words of Jeremiah:

They shall not be lamented, neither gathered nor buried (Jeremiah 25:33).

We repeat, it will be a world-wide war led by Satan. But here is God's promise:

The Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel (Joel 3:16).

"Angels that excel in strength" will protect those whose names are in the Book of Life. Psalm 91 is a wonderful picture of God's care during that frightful holocaust.

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

Just as Israel of old was protected during the plagues of ancient Egypt, so God will overshadow all who put their trust in Him. He says,

With thine eyes thou shalt behold and see the reward of the wicked. . .

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling (Psalm 91:7, 11).

Nothing in all history can compare with what the world will see when our Messiah comes in "power and great glory." But for those who have rejected His grace, nothing since the days of Noah will be so terrifying, for

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the Lord Himself will direct the battle. Fierce lightnings leap from the skies as peals of thunder, mysterious and awful, come crashing through. In abject fear, the wicked flee in terror seeking cover from His blazing presence for "the Lord alone will be exalted in that day" (Isaiah 2:17). While all nature seems out of joint, those who have accepted salvation will raise this song of triumph:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in our trouble.

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea (Psalm 46:1, 2).

Only those who know Him as their "Refuge" will be shielded when the earth reels and rocks to ruin. In that indescribable "time of trouble" God says:

Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the Book (Daniel 12:1).

Is your name, dear friend, written in that book? It will be too late when that final battle begins, but you can have your name inscribed in that book before it closes forever. Those whose names are written there will be saved in that great day. They will be delivered, not because they are Jews or Gentiles, not because they are white or black, not even because they are good citizens and pay their taxes and live respectable lives, but because they have accepted God's grace. Armageddon has no terrors for those who abide "under the shadow of the Almighty." The promise is: "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler" (Psalm 91:4). Through Isaiah, God says:

Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in (Isaiah 26:2).

Are you keeping the truth, dear friend? Do you long to be sheltered in that tremendous day? Then you must prepare

now. The Scripture says, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). Soon Satan will plunge the world into a holocaust of destruction far more terrible than that which swept over Jerusalem in 70 A.D. And this will not be confined to one city nor even to one nation for every country and every nation of the world will be involved. But at the height of the conflagration, heaven's King will appear leading forth the armies of heaven. Says the prophet Joel:

Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O
LORD (Joel 3:11).

God's angels, His mighty ones, will be there, not only to hold back the forces of darkness, but also to protect the children of light.

It has been well said, "God Himself has a part to act in the Battle of Armageddon." He surely does. And in that last show-down with evil there will be no neutrals; all will be on one side or the other. On which side will you be? Your eternal life is bound with your answer.

Now let us turn from the tragic scenes of Doomsday and view the coming glories of God's Day — the day to which the prophets of all the ages looked forward.

Chapter Twenty

TRUE ISRAEL'S

FANTASTIC FUTURE

For Zion's sake I will not keep silence,
For Jerusalem's sake I will speak out
until her right shines forth like the sunrise,
her deliverance like a blazing torch,
until the nations see the triumph of your right
and all kings see your glory.

Then shall you be called by a new name
which the Lord shall pronounce with his own lips;
you will be a glorious crown in the Lord's hand,
a kingly diadem in the hand of God.

No more shall men call you Forsaken,
no more shall your name be called Desolate,
but you shall be named Hephzibah [my delight is in her]
and your land Beulah[wedded];
for the Lord delights in you
and to him your land is wedded. . . .
and your God shall rejoice over you
as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride.

Isaiah 62:1-5, New English Bible

How enthusiastic the prophets became as they viewed the future! Yes, God's true Israel has a future — a fantastic future. The Lord's eternal plan for His people and for the world itself, is clearly portrayed in Scripture and the beyondness of His latitude is immense.

The orientation of Israel's faith always embraced the

future. To the prophets, the past was but the prologue of what was yet to be. God's righteous rule on earth is what they proclaimed as they stood like watchmen on the walls with trumpets to their lips.

The preposition "until" seems to be inscribed over all the Old Testament. Daniel described a ruthless, destructive power that would oppose God's people "until."

The prophet declared of this power - it:

Made war with the saints and prevailed against them; **until** the Ancient of days came and judgment was given to the saints of the most High.

He climaxed the description by saying that,

The time came that the saints possessed the kingdom (Daniel 7:21-22).

Now who are these "Saints"? They are the true Israel of God, those who have accepted His grace and have found the joy of Salvation. He tells of the magnitude of that kingdom which they inherit.

And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. . . .Verse 27

The New English Bible reads:

The kingly power, sovereignty, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

PROPHETIC PICTURES OF THE FUTURE

The Scriptures do not give us narrow ideas of Israel's future, far from it. Through the prophet Micah, God said

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And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem (Micah 4:8).

What was that "first dominion?" Was it just a narrow strip of land on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean? By no means. It was the world. The dominion, the sovereignty given to the human family by the Creator, is embraced in this promise of a restored dominion. At that time God said,

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (Genesis 1:26).

We repeat, man's original dominion was a world-wide dominion. So when God fully restores the kingdom, it will again be a universal dominion as Gabriel told Daniel:

The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High.

This was the promise given to Abraham. The Scripture says,

Abraham. . . was given the promise that the world should be his inheritance (Romans 4:13, N.E.B.).

And that world of the future will be a world established on the foundations of righteousness and justice. It will be a world of peace and prosperity. Read Psalm 89 and catch the inspiration of that ancient Hebrew hymn. All this was wrapped up in the covenant blessings, as one of the sages exclaimed:

Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off (Proverbs 24:18, R.S.V.)

For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11, R.S.V.).

What comfort such promises brought to the exiles in Babylon! No religion outside of Israel possessed such a firm basis for hope in the future.

Even amidst the direst persecutions, Israel continued to hope. When all the future seemed dark and foreboding, we still hear the prophet saying to his people:

I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Israel, and I will hope in him (Isaiah 8:16, R.S.V.).

Sometimes it seemed that history itself mocked the faith of Israel, and some of the people cried in anguish:

My way is hid from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God.

But the prophet of hope brought the assurance of victory in such majestic lines as these:

**But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.
(Isaiah 40: 27, 31, R.S.V.)**

How wonderful has been the Hebrews' contribution to the world's literature! Their poetry pulsates continually with hope and promise. But the events of the future will outwit everything of the past. What the prophets envisioned is about to be realized. And it will be

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something far different from the distortions, corruptions, and failures that make up so much of the history of Israel and the world. The cosmic setting in which the Scriptures tell of God's new eschatological activity is inspiring. Catch the cadence of these lyrics as the whole universe is stirred to ultimate joy.

They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD (Isaiah 24:24).

Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody (Isaiah 51:3).

The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35:10).

The *first* three chapters of the Bible tell the story of creation and the entrance of sin into the world. Then by contrast, the *last* three chapters unfold God's plan for the eradication of sin and sinners and foretell the recreation of our earth. Among the most sublime statements ever penned are these words from the books of Isaiah and Revelation:

Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. . .

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new (Revelation 21:1, 5).

It does not say all new *things*, but "all things *new*." This will be a re-creation. The earth, so long the battlefield of contending forces, will be re-

made. It will once again scintillate with the glory it had when it began its orbital journey in space. And this renewed earth, in full Edenic beauty, will be the home of God's true Israel. It will be far different from the world we know today, for in that world, "the inhabitant shall not say 'I am sick'" (Isaiah 33:24) and "violence shall no more be heard in thy land" (Isaiah 60:18). Can we imagine a world without violence, without police, without jails, without doctors, without hospitals; a world where pain and sorrow, death, and destruction are no more? That is God's picture of Israel's future. He says,

My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places (Isaiah 32:18).

For the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Thy people also shall be all righteous (Isaiah 60:20, 21).

More marvelous still is the promise that on the renewed earth the very throne of God will be established. Note these wonderful words:

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see him face to face. . . There shall be no more night, nor will they need the light of lamp or sun,

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for the Lord God will give them light; and they shall reign for evermore (Revelation 22:3-5, N.E.B.).

Those who love and serve the Lord, whose sins have been forgiven, will see visions of beauty beyond belief: flowers that never fade, fruits that never decay, fields of living green, and music that knows no discord. In that land of loveliness, we will lay down our cares and take the crown of immortal life — our pilgrimage past, our weariness gone forever.

Secure in the fellowship of God and His angels, we shall rest on the verdant banks of the River of Life which flows through the city to which Abraham looked as he left the haunts of commerce and sin to obey the call of God. The Scripture says,

Abraham left home without knowing where he was to go. . . For he was looking forward to the city with firm foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:8, 10, N.E.B.).

His goal was not just one of the cities of the Near East but the eternal city, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the city John saw “descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: . . . like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Revelation 21:20). The jasper, according to authorities, was the ancient name for the diamond. Try to imagine a city flashing like a diamond in its purity! The Patmos prophet’s description of this future metropolis is breath-taking in its beauty.

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald.

The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a

topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst (Revelation 21:18-20).

Such is the forecast of that tremendous city where the true Israel of God will gather week by week to worship Him whose love and grace have made it possible. If we would sing the jubilee song with the millions of God's redeemed people and share their eternal joy, we must heed God's call as did faithful Abraham. The message in his day was a command to "go." God's last message in our day is "come." "Come out of her my people" (Revelation 18:4), and "Come for all things are now ready" (Luke 14:17). That message is sounding forth in every land of earth. The certainty of God's message of hope is summed up in these words:

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly (Revelation 22:20).

Thus closes the volume of inspiration. It closes with this most wonderful of all promises. Soon we shall sing a song of triumph, a song unheard of and unknown. It will be a mighty anthem of praise ascending from hearts that overflow in gratitude.

While the glory of God like a molten sea,
Bathes the immortal company.

And in that land of joy and glory, we shall fellowship with the perfection of heavenly society — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Joseph, Moses, and Jeremiah; Noah, David, and Job; Miriam, Esther, and Isaiah; prophets, apostles, martyrs — these all will be there. And with them, the unnumbered millions of whom we have no knowledge but who have been redeemed by the grace of Israel's God. Yes, they will be there. We, too, must be there. We must see the wilderness and the desert rejoicing and blossoming as the rose. To those who long for that eternal day of gladness, our Redeemer says,

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Strengthen the feeble arms,
steady the tottering knees
say to the anxious, Be strong and fear not.
See, your God comes with vengeance,
with dread retribution he comes to save you.
Then shall the blind man's eyes be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
Then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the dumb shout aloud;
for water springs up in the wilderness
and torrents flow in dry land.

. . . .

No savage heast . . .
shall be found there.
not one shall be found there.
By it those he has ransomed shall return
and the Lord's redeemed come home;
they shall enter Zion with shouts of triumph,
crowned with everlasting gladness.
Gladness and joy shall be their escort,
and suffering and weariness shall flee away.
(Isaiah 35:3-10, N.E.B.).

What marvelous pen-pictures the prophets give of Israel in eternity, when the heavenly Jerusalem becomes the metropolis of the new earth and the saved from all the nations make up the Israel of God. What is transpiring in the Holy Land today is nothing in comparison to what is soon to happen when the Lord goes forth to fight against those who pollute His name and destroy His people.

Note these words, quoted by one of our scientists from E.G. White, one of the world's most impressive writers:

The battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought.
He on whose vesture is written the name King of
kings and Lord of lords, is soon to lead forth the
armies of heaven (The Time of the End, p. 165).

FANTASTIC FUTURE

When that tremendous day arrives, the case of every person on earth will have been settled. God gives to each an opportunity to accept His grace. But remember —

Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (II Corinthians 6:2).

To be certain of salvation, all we have to do is to receive what God offers. He says,

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins (Isaiah 43:25).

This is God's call. It has sounded down through all the corridors of time, but today we hear it with a new imperative:

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth (Isaiah 45:22).

The events of our generation sound the solemn message that the Day of the Lord is upon us. Soon it will be too late. God's message through the prophet Zephaniah comes with special meaning for our day:

Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;

Before the decree bring forth. . . before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you.

Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth. . . it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger (Zephaniah 2:1-3).

While that day will be a day of destruction for those who are unprepared, it will be the day of deliverance for the true Israel of God. When God's waiting ones behold His glory as He descends with His holy angels they will shout their delight and sing in the spirit of victory:

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Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and
he will save us. . . this is Yahweh; we have waited
for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation
(Isaiah 25:9).

Horatius Bonar, that old Scottish saint of last
century, expressed this tremendous truth as he envisioned
that coming day of victory. His poem sums up our
message.

Rise daughter of Judah;
Awake now and sing;
It has come, the glad kingdom,
He has come, the great King!

Thy long night is ending
Of sorrow and wrong
For shame there is glory,
For weeping a song.

The new morn is dawning, .
Bursts forth the new sun;
The new verdure is smiling,
The new age is begun.

And that "new age" will continue throughout eternity
Isaiah, the greatest of the gospel prophets, climaxes his
message with these words:

For as the new heavens and the new earth,
which I will make, shall remain before me, saith
the LORD, so shall your seed and your name
remain.

And it shall come to pass, that all mankind
shall come to bow down before Me, saith the
Lord (Isaiah 66:22, 23, N.E.B.).

What a fantastic future that will be! And it comes not
by conquest, not by man's ingenuity, but by the abundant
grace of the God of Israel — the God of all the nations of

all the world. Praise be to Him for His matchless love and saving power.

What wonderful worship it will be when the Great Shepherd of Israel leads His flock to the fountains of living water and feeds them with the fruits of the tree of life. Robert Burns, Scottish poet and philosopher could not read those wonderful words in Revelation 7:16-17 and 20:4 without tears. He had a gifted mind but he had been buffeted by the storms of passion and his soul soiled with sin. Yet deep within him, as with many others, was a hunger for God. With his head in his hands and through his tears he would read: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away."

Some day soon the Messiah will appear with all His mighty angels. Surrounded by all the glories of heaven He comes as "King of kings and Lord of lords." The prophet also says, "On His head were many crowns" and "He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood" (Revelation 19:12-13). Why blood? Because blood was the price of our redemption. When Aaron, as the type of our great High-Priest-Messiah was consecrated, his garments were "sprinkled with blood" (Leviticus 8:30). So when our Messiah, having obtained our eternal redemption by the sacrifice of Himself, (Hebrews 9:11-12) finishes His intercessory ministry and comes for all who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice (Psalms 50:5) He will bring with Him the receipt of our purchase — His blood-stained robe.

How precious is blood when life hangs in the balance! A chubby boy, four years old, was playing with his ball when it bounced onto the street. Not looking for traffic, he ran out to retrieve it when he was struck by a passing car. Hearing his scream, the mother rushed to his rescue. He was bleeding profusely. As he was hurried to the hospital the father was notified.

The doctors gave scarcely a 50-50 chance for his life.

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The only way to save him would be by blood transfusions. (This was in the early days of this method of treatment.) They tested the father's blood but it was not the right type. It was a very rare type but fortunately the mother's blood matched. They took a pint of her blood and the child rallied. But a few days later the doctor said, "Your child is beginning to fail. I hope we can find someone with the type of blood we need." They advertised but not one of all that came had the right type. So the mother pleaded with the doctor to take more from her. "You are not strong enough," he said. But she insisted that he take her blood that her child might live. He said, "Well I will, but you must promise me you will go to bed for a week."

Sadly the doctor reported later that the boy was again failing and the hospital could not find anyone with the right type of blood needed. The mother kneeled at his feet pleading with him to take more of her blood. "I will take half a pint, but I know I really should not." Again the child rallied. Soon the doctor returned with the same sad story — the boy was failing. But he assured the parents that he had given orders that as soon as anyone came with his blood type they were to administer blood immediately.

The next morning after the husband went to work the mother arose, dressed and phoned for a taxi. "Take me to the nearest barber," she said to the driver. Arriving there she said, "You wait here for me." She went inside and said to the barber, "Give me a man's haircut." This done she stepped into the taxi and went home. There she dressed herself in her husband's suit, shoes and hat. Then she called another taxi and told him to take her to the hospital. She took her place in the line of those waiting to have their blood tested. When one of the interns examined her blood he went to the chief medical officer saying, "There is a man here with just the right type they are looking for." "Take a pint of his blood and give it to the child immediately," the doctor said.

This done those doctors went on with their work. But soon one of the nurses said, "Did you hear about that man we took blood from who fell unconscious? Now he's in a coma."

The doctor went in and said, "Undress him and put him to bed." When they began to undress the man they discovered it was a woman. Suspecting it might be the mother, they called the doctor. When he came he saw at once it was indeed the mother. Slowly, almost reverently, he said, "She will die."

Going to the child's room he saw him, not lying in bed too weak to move, but standing up, holding on to his crib and saying, "I want my mamma, I want my mamma." Stepping over to him the doctor said, "Sonny, you will live but your mamma will die."

He called for the father and told him what had happened. Then said to the intern, "Quickly give that mother a stimulant in order that she might see her child alive before she dies."

The stimulant was administered and soon she rallied enough to open her eyes. The first thing she caught sight of was her little boy whom the father was holding. Then she said faintly, "Sonny, Sonny!" The doctor then spoke, "Yes, Sonny will live. He has passed the crisis." She looked up at her boy and whispered, "Thank God!" then laid her head back and tragically passed to her rest.

That mother gave her life that her son might live. So our Messiah sacrificed Himself that we might live and in the virtue of that sacrifice he will soon erase all the wounds of war and the hurts of hate. We must be there to bask in the forgiving smiles of the God who loved us and gave Himself for us. We then will lay aside our griefs and take the crown of immortality, knowing that the curse of sin can never again entangle us in its hateful toils. And best of all we will see our Saviour face to face. "O Israel be glad and rejoice with all the heart" (Zephaniah 3:14).

APPENDIX I

THE PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

**Delivered by David Ben-Gurion,
Israel's first Premier, May 14, 1948.**

In the land of Israel the Jewish people came into being. In this land was shaped their spiritual, religious and national character. Here they lived in sovereign independence. Here they created a culture of national and universal import, and gave to the world the eternal book of Books.

Exiled by force, still the Jewish people kept faith with their land in all the countries of their dispersion, steadfast in their prayer and hope to return and here revive their political freedom.

Fired by this attachment of history and tradition, the Jews in every generation strove to renew their roots in the ancient Homeland, and in recent generations they came in their multitudes.

Veteran pioneers and defenders, and newcomers braving blockade, they made the wilderness bloom, revived their Hebrew tongue, and built villages and towns. They founded a thriving society, master of its own economy and culture, pursuing peace but able to defend itself, bringing the blessing of progress to all the inhabitants of the Land, dedicated to the attainment of sovereign independence.

In 1897 the First Zionist Congress met at the call of Theodor Herzl, seer of the vision of the Jewish State, and gave public voice to the right of the Jewish people to national restoration in their land.

This right was acknowledged in the Balfour Declaration on 2 November 1917 and confirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which accorded international validity to the historical connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, and to their right to re-establish their National Home.

The holocaust that in our time destroyed millions of Jews in Europe again proved beyond a doubt the compelling need to solve the problem of Jewish homelessness and dependence by the renewal of the Jewish State in the Land of Israel, which would open wide the gates of the Homeland to every Jew and endow the Jewish people with the status of a nation with equality of rights within the family of nations.

Despite every hardship, hindrance and peril, the remnant that survived the grim Nazi slaughter in Europe, together with Jews from other countries, pressed on with their exodus to the Land of Israel and continued to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in the Homeland of their people.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community in the Land of Israel played its full part in the struggle of the nations championing freedom and peace against the Nazi forces of evil. Its war effort and the lives of its soldiers won it the right to be numbered among the founding peoples of the United Nations.

On 29 November 1947 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in the Land of Israel, and required the inhabitants themselves to take all measures necessary on their part to carry out the resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their own State is irrevocable.

It is the natural right of the Jewish people, like any other people, to control their own destiny in their sovereign State.

ACCORDINGLY WE, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in the land of Israel and the Zionist Movement, have assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine, and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and of the resolution of

the General Assembly of the United Nations, do hereby proclaim the establishment of a Jewish State in the land of Israel — the State of Israel.

WE RESOLVE that, from the moment the Mandate ends, at midnight on the Sabbath, the sixth of Iyar 5708, the fifteenth day of May 1948, until the establishment of the duly elected authorities of the State in accordance with a Constitution to be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than 1 October 1948, the National Council shall act as the Provisional Council of State, and its executive arm, the National Administration, shall constitute the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, and the name of the State shall be Israel.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open to Jewish immigration and the gathering of exiles. It will devote itself to developing the Land for the good of all its inhabitants.

It will rest upon foundations of liberty, justice and peace as envisioned by the Prophets of Israel. It will maintain complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens, without distinction of creed, race or sex. It will guarantee freedom of religion and conscience, of language, education and culture. It will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions. It will be loyal to the Principles of the United Nations Charter.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be prepared to cooperate with the organs and representatives of the United Nations in carrying out the General Assembly resolution of 29 November 1947, and will work for the establishment of the economic union of the whole Land of Israel.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building of their State, and to admit the State of Israel into the family of nations.

EVEN AMIDST the violent attacks launched against us for months past, we call upon the sons of

the Arab people dwelling in Israel to keep the peace and to play their part in building the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its institutions, provisional and permanent.

WE EXTEND the hand of peace and good-neighborliness to all the States around us and to their peoples, and we call upon them to cooperate in mutual helpfulness with the independent Jewish nation in its Land. The State of Israel is prepared to make its contribution in a concerted effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE CALL upon the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to join forces with us in immigration and construction, and to be at our right hand in the great endeavor to fulfill the age-old longing for the redemption of Israel.

WITH TRUST IN THE ROCK OF ISRAEL, we set our hands in witness to this Proclamation, at this session of the Provisional Council of State, on the soil of the Homeland, in the city of Tel Aviv, this Sabbath eve, the fifth day of Iyar, 5708, the fourteenth day of May, nineteen hundred and forty-eight.

HATIKVAH

The National Anthem

So long as still within our hearts
The Jewish heart beats true,
So long as still towards the East,
To Zion, looks the Jew,
So long as our hopes are not yet lost —
Two thousand years we cherished them
To live in freedom in the land
Of Zion and Jerusalem.

TIMETABLE OF PALESTINE DISPUTE

As set forth in

U. S. News and World Report, June 11, 1948

Nov. 2, 1917: Lord Balfour, British Foreign Secretary, approves plan for a "national home" for the Jewish people in Palestine. U. S. endorses idea.

Sept. 29, 1923: Britain takes over Palestine for the League of Nations, promising to permit Jews to create a "national home" in the country. Arabs protest.

Aug. 23, 1929: British Troops halt Arab attacks on Jewish settlements.

Aug. 25, 1936: Palestine Arabs united to oppose Jewish immigration. Arab states join Britain to urge peace, but sporadic fighting between Jews and Arabs continues.

June 22, 1937: Jews and Arabs reject a British proposal to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. British limit Jewish immigration.

Sept. 3, 1939: The Mufti of Jerusalem, Palestine Arab leader, sides with Germany, but Palestine is quiet as core of British defense of Middle East in World War II.

Sept. 29, 1945: President Truman asks Britain to admit 100,000 Jewish refugees to Palestine. Anglo-American committee supports plan, but Arab states protest.

Nov. 29, 1947: U. N. Assembly adopts partition plan urged by U.S. Jews accept it.

May 15, 1948: Jews create state of Israel, recognized by U. S. and Russia. Britain quits governing Palestine. Israel fights armies of five Arab states.

June 1, 1948: Jews and Arabs accept U. N. Request for four-week truce in Palestine.

Britain gave up responsibility for the country of Palestine on May 15. On that same day the Jews created the state of Israel, which was recognized by the leading countries of the world. At that time there were approximately 500,000 Jewish men, women, and children in Israel and approximately 110 million Arabs surrounding Israel.

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The International Critical Commentary.
The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.

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